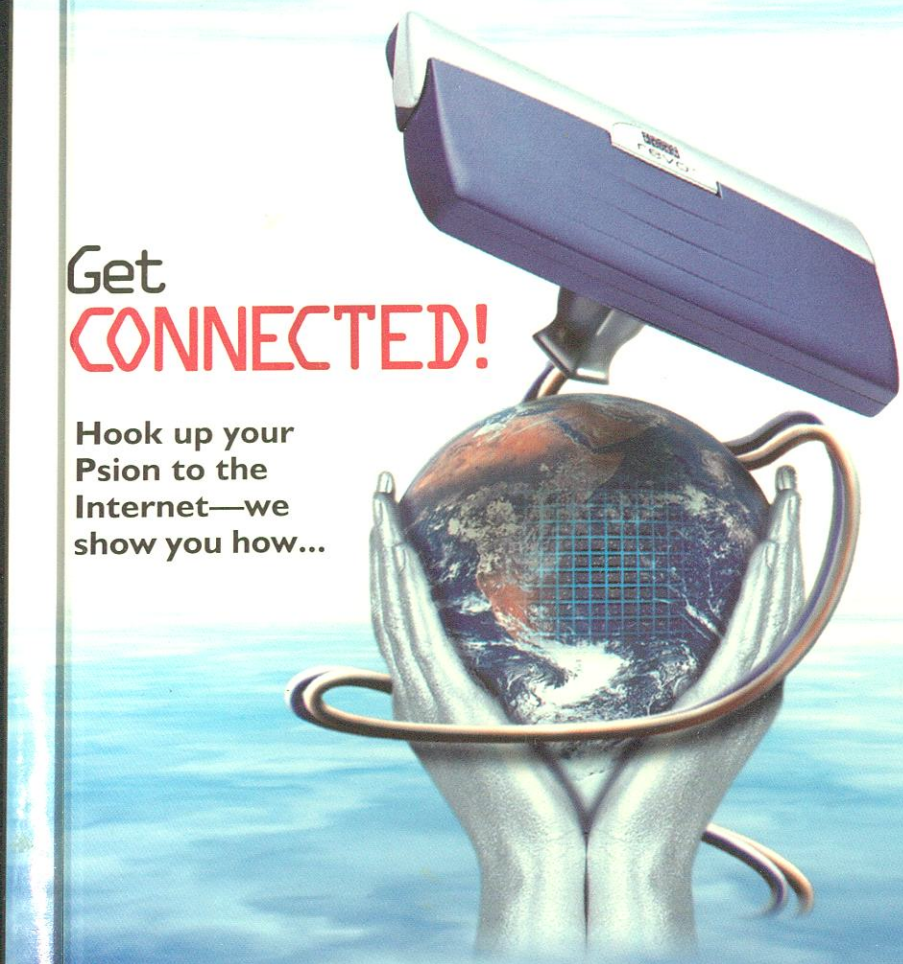
Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

Issue 30



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Hook up your Psion to the Internet—we show you how...

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!
Ericsson's EPOC-powered R380

CLOVE TECHNOLOGY

- Talk directly to our friendly, knowledgeable team—no tiresome key selection precedure!
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- Clear and informative web site
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- Competitive prices

Psion Series 5mx	£325
Ericsson MC218	£295
Psion Revo	£215
Psion Series 7	£555

Prices exclude VAT and delivery

With your Psion, you thought you had the ultimate gadget — here's your chance to gain another!

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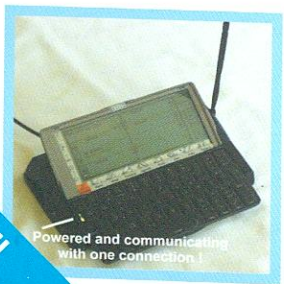
This 100% accurate, radio controlled alarm clock projects the time on the wall or the ceiling. So it's ideal for spectacle wearers. Neatly styled, it has a two-line display for time and date, plus a second time Zone.
There's an 8-minute snooze function, plus two independent crescendo alarms.

The Weather WALL Clock
Giving a large clear digital display, this stylish wall clock gives all the information you could possibly need.. Not only does it display the time, it also gives the date and month, the room temperature and a graphic illustration of the predicted weather for the next 12 hours using its in-built pressure trends barometer. An alarm is also included.

Digital deluxe Weather Station
With its 7-line, LCD display, this ultimate unit gives you the weather forecast; indoor and outdoor temperature, plus trend indication; relative humidity, comfort indicator; current barometric pressure, plus readings for the last 24 hours; current phase of the moon; as well as the date and time, together with an alarm. Supplied with one state-of-the-art remote temperature sensor unit, the weather station can be table or wall mounted.

Docking Station for the 5mx/mc218 or Series 7
Simple docking to a PC whilst providing mains power. Holds machine securely on your desk.- just £25 plus VAT



visit our web site!!
www.clove.co.uk

Car Stand and Car Mains Unit for the Series 5/mx
Allows the Series 5/mx/MC218 to be held at a good (adjustable) working angle for use in the car. It has a cut out for connection for a car mains unit (why not order both together) and GPS cables.

STOP PRESS! Psion Series 7 Car Adaptor
We now have a car vehicle adaptor for the Series 7, the first available. This is a must for Series 7 users, as, of course, it recharges the battery at the same time, just in case you didn't!

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Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

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Submissions

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EDITORIAL

Until a few years ago, it was commonplace for computer hardware to cost at least 40% more when purchased outside the USA than when purchased within it. Here in the UK, the general rule of thumb for calculating prices was simply to substitute the '$' sign with a '£', keeping the numbers the same. Thus a $1500 computer would cost £1500 in the UK—then equivalent to around $2300.

The situation has gradually improved over the past few years, due in part, no doubt, to the number of Internet-based dealers exporting at favourable US prices. Indeed, it's now possible to buy most common computer goods at comparable prices in many countries—certainly within most of Western Europe.

With the USA being the world's biggest single marketplace for computers it's understandable that prices might be lower there, particularly for home-grown goods. In the past, Psion have been guilty of 'biasing' their pricing structure in favour of the US market, despite the fact that all product had to be exported from their UK-based manufacturing facility, and that Psion sales have always been relatively poor in North America, negating the argument of 'volume discounts'.

Nowadays, pricing parity has even spread to the Psion world, with the 8MB Revo on sale at around £215 (excluding VAT) here in the UK, and $400 in the USA, making it marginally cheaper here—at least at the current exchange rate. Given the fairer state of affairs we're now enjoying, I was astonished to see the recent release of the Psion 56k Travel Modem in the USA, at a price of only $129. The same device costs around £144 here in the UK, (*excluding* the 17.5% VAT), while US buyers are paying around £85 plus tax..

Psion have never been renowned for their sensitivity towards their home market (US Series 3c users got a backlight long before European users), but this pricing discrepancy surely calls for a rethink?

Steve Clack - August 2000

Palmtop is...

Steve Clack - Publishing Editor

Rosemary Rolfe - Distribution Manager

Christian Hayle - Artwork & Design

Tracy Braham - Subscriptions

Steve Litchfield - Sub-Editor

Pete Sipple - Technical Contributor

John Woodthorpe - Senior Contributor

Thanks... to all the other contributors whose names appear within *Palmtop* and those who have kindly supplied products for evaluation.

Series 5 cartoons - Carl Reader

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NEWSREEL

What's new in the world of EPOC

Still going strong

Psion have announced their preliminary results for the first half of 2000, showing £94 million turnover and £7 million profit. Sales were up by 47% on the previous six months. Also significant is that Symbian shareholders have decided to 'float' Symbian on the stock markets, subject to good progress and prevailing conditions.

www.psion.com/media/Interims2000Numbersv.pdf

Psion buy Fonedata...

Psion has bought Fonedata, paying just over £1m. Fonedata had established itself as a leading provider of WAP services for corporations and also operates a popular WAP portal service for consumers.

...and then give it to Trivanti

Psion will contribute Fonedata (see above), the assets of its recently formed Psion Internet division, and over £3m in cash to a huge joint venture with United News and Media, provisionally named Trivanti. United News and Media is contributing almost £5m in cash to the venture. Trivanti will seek to establish itself as a leading European provider of mobile Internet services, including a consumer WAP portal, solutions for specific vertical markets such as healthcare and financial services, and developing corporate solutions.

www.trivanti.com

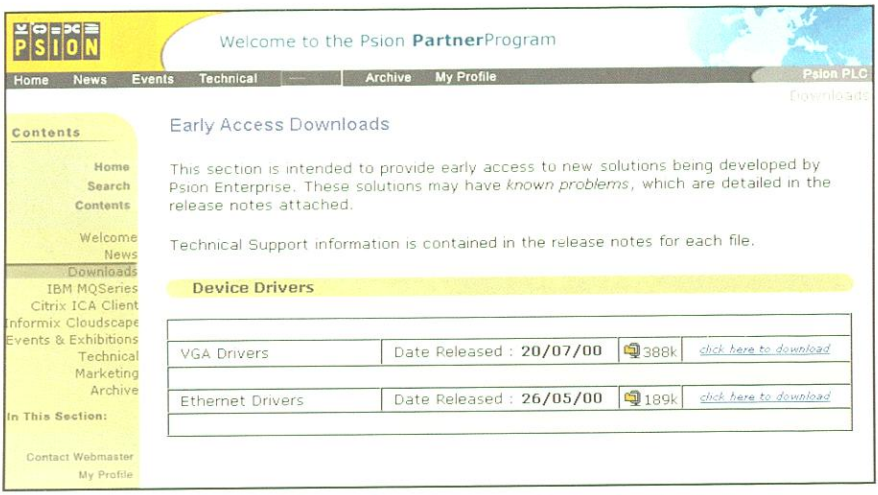
Travel Modem in the USA

Psion has officially launched its infrared Travel Modem (reviewed in issue 27) in the USA, marketing it as suitable not just for EPOC computers but also for Palm and Windows CE (Pocket PC).

www.psioninc.com/PersonalMobility/Communications

Psion and Compaq forge partnership

Psion Connect (formerly Psion Dacom) has agreed to develop and supply Compaq with Bluetooth connectivity solutions for a wide range of notebook and desktop platforms.



Download the latest 'extras' for your Series 7/netBook...

In addition to its Bluetooth technology partnerships with PC manufacturers, Psion Connect will also sell and support Bluetooth products worldwide under its Gold Card brand name.

www.psionconnect.com

Psion Enterprise goodies

In exchange for email registration with them, Psion Enterprise have made available a number of long-awaited 'goodies' on their web site, all for Series 7 and netBook owners only:

- A pre-registered release version of the Opera web browser—see page 19 for a full review.
- A MindTerm SSH Client for connecting securely into company networks.
- Ethernet drivers, for use with suitable PC-Card network adaptors, to connect to a company network.
- VgaSuite, a package which lets you connect any standard external PC monitor through the Voyager VGA PC-Card adaptor for the display of slides and/or 'current screen' images. Three refresh rates are provided, Slow, Medium and Fast. These allow for the display of both Still and Moving images. The slide-show utility displays BMP and PCX files. Up to 256 colours and resolutions of 640x480 and 800x600 are supported.

www.enterprise.psion.com/partners/download.htm

Paragon get official approval

Paragon Software have now signed a license agreement with Symbian for their port of Sketch for the Revo, reported in issue 29. Paragon have also released a new version of Sketch, supporting English, German, French, Spanish and Russian languages.

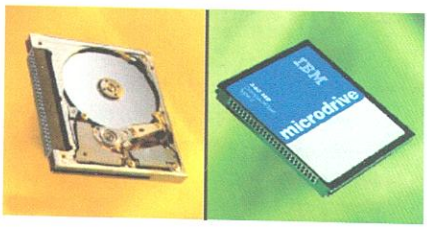
www.penreader.com/products.htm

First SyncML demonstration

Psion, along with other founders of the SyncML initiative, provided supporters with the world's first preview of the new SyncML synchronization protocol in action at the SyncML Supporter Summit in Los Angeles.

Psion was one of the sponsors who demonstrated a synchronization solution based upon the first revision of the SyncML technical specification. Supporters were given an exclusive preview of SyncML being used to synchronize the Agenda of a Psion Revo to a Lotus Domino server.

www.syncml.org



Gigabyte CF hard drive

IBM have announced the release of a one gigabyte Type II CF hard disk drive in September. This will allow triple the storage capacity for Series 7s and netBooks armed with IBM's previous 340MB Microdrive.

www.ibm.com

Psion to buy Teklogix

Psion PLC has announced its intention to acquire Teklogix, the Canadian developer of industrial mobile and wireless computing solutions. It is thought that Teklogix's strong presence in the USA, which accounts for half its revenues, and its leading position in local area and wide area mobile communications are the main drivers behind the acquisition. Teklogix also has a strategic investment in SyVox Corporation, a leader in voice control technology.

www.psion.com/tl/warning.html

Elegant city guide

Elegant-Lifestyle.com has launched the 'Best 100 city guide for London', listing the best 100 addresses in London for hotels, restaurants, entertainment and shopping. It's been released in several formats, including EPOC and CSV format.

www.elegant-lifestyle.com/london.htm#Best100L

Infomatrix convertors

Symbian have entered into a development partnership with Infomatrix, the Cambridge-based specialist in wireless software solutions. Future Symbian software will incorporate their file format convertors for MS Office email attachments, allowing the editing and viewing of desktop spreadsheet and word processor documents.

www.infomatrix.ltd.uk
www.symbian.com

eKiosks emerge

eKiosk.com and Clarinet Infrared Systems have announced a partnership agreement to provide wireless infrared connectivity to millions of travellers carrying handheld and laptop devices. Recognising the rising popularity of such infrared-equipped palmtops as the Psion Revo and 5mx, eKiosk is the first company to provide owners with the ability to connect to the Internet through a high-speed eKiosk workstation. The first eKiosks installed with Clarinet's infrared

ports are located at Northwest Airlines WorldClubs in Minneapolis and Detroit in the USA. Anyone using a compatible device can instantly access an eKiosk to check and send email or surf the Web. Typical vertical markets include hotels, airport lounges and hospitality suites.

www.ekiosk.com

Anti-virus?

Despite widespread doubt as to whether such measures are necessary, several anti-virus software vendors are planning utilities for handheld devices, including those running EPOC. The idea is to both scan for and protect against future handheld viruses while also trapping any desktop variants from being spread using the palmtop as the transmission medium.

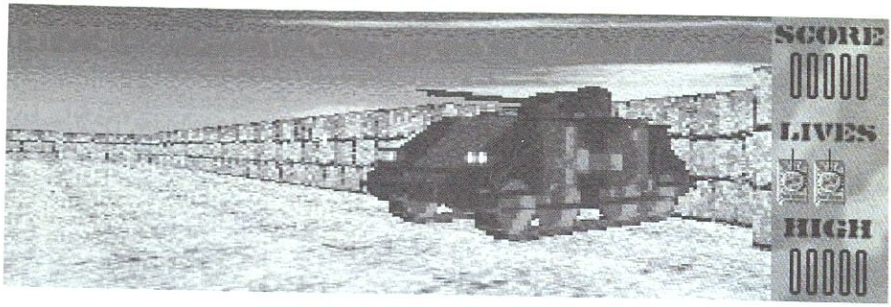
First to announce products are F-Secure and McAfee. We hope to be looking at these products in more detail in the next issue of *Palmtop*.

MPEG video at last

GEO, an Israel-based provider of wireless video solutions, has announced that it has developed a version of its Emblaze A2 MPEG4 decoder software for Symbian handhelds, including the current EPOC palmtops. Symbian has agreed to include the technology on a showcase CD for third party technologies running on its platform.

The Emblaze wireless technology will enable all existing and future Symbian-based devices to access streaming audio and video services over existing and future cellular networks. Applications will include live video coverage, video on-demand applications, video messaging and two way full-duplex video conferencing.

The core of Emblaze's technology is a compression and formatting algorithm which enables interactive media data transfer at real-world data rates. Rather than downloading a plug-in from one of the streaming media vendors, when users click on audio or video content on web sites using Emblaze, a tiny Java Applet (or ActiveX, on a laptop



or similar) component is sent to the user's computer, enabling the playback of rich media in Streaming File Format. Each piece of the original content is independently decompressed and displayed as it reaches its destination, without waiting for the rest of the content to arrive.

Emblaze's Dynamic Bandwidth Scalability algorithms also adapt content quality in real-time to match current bandwidth capacity and fluctuations.

www.geo.co.il

New doctor on the block

A new web site has been launched for medical and healthcare professionals, featuring a comprehensive database of drugs and medicines. There are over 1500 monographs and the medical notes have EGCs, x-rays and graphs.

www.mydoktor.com

Wild about EPOC

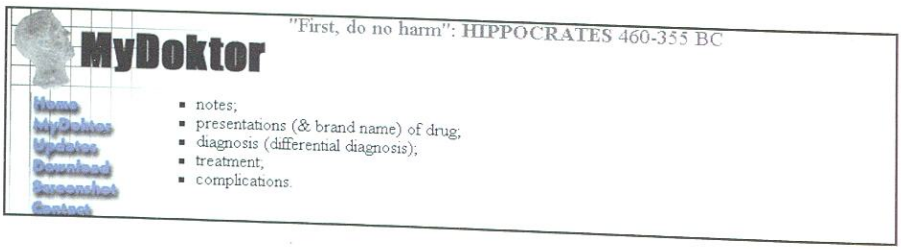
Looking rather impressive is WildPalm, home of a new breed of 3D action games. The first of these is Terra Force, shown here, which works on both Series 5mx and Revo.

www.wildpalm.co.uk

BT Global Challenge

Psion Computers have announced a sponsorship deal with the BT Global Challenge 2000/2001, the world's toughest yacht race. In addition to providing sponsorship funds for the Team Carnegie boat, one of a fleet of 12 which will be taking part, Psion has equipped each boat captain with a Psion Revo to help them manage logs, communications and on-board administration.

www.psion.com/index_computers.asp



INDUSTRY NEWS

In this regular feature we devote a single page to what's happening in the non-EPOC sector of mobile computing...

Compaq's new Pocket PC, the iPAQ, has officially been launched. This Palm-sized device has a colour TFT display, 32MB of RAM, 16MB of ROM and a 206MHz processor, making it the fastest device of its kind. Priced at £399, it connects to a PC via USB and offers modular expansion capabilities by way of slide-on 'jackets'.

Casio are offering a special deal for Cassiopeia users in the USA. E100 and E105 owners can either upgrade their ROM to run the new Pocket PC platform or trade in their handhelds and receive a 32MB Pocket PC with the new operating system.

Believing firmly that handheld computers will play a major rôle in its mobile computing strategy, Sony has unveiled two new mobile devices, running Palm OS. The PEG-S500C offers a colour display while the PEG-S300 has a mono screen. Both employ Sony's Memory Stick technology and are due for release shortly.

Handspring has released three of its colourful Visor handhelds onto the European market. Again running Palm OS, the Visor, Visor Solo and Visor Deluxe all feature Handspring's 'Springboard' expansion system, a plug-and-play hardware expansion slot that allows MP3, modem and flash memory modules to be plugged in when required. The Visor and Visor Solo have 2MB of RAM while the Deluxe has 8MB and comes in a choice of five colours.

Palm have launched the M100, their answer to the Visor Solo and aimed at the education market. Priced at $149 and only available from their own online store, the M100 is roughly the same size as a Palm Vx but with a curvaceous plastic front with swappable coloured panels. It has 2MB of RAM and the screen is scaled down by 25%.

Siemens has unleashed one of the smallest handheld computers onto the mobile market. The IC-35 is roughly the same size as a pack of playing cards. As well as having the usual PIM features such as a diary, it has a built-in WAP browser, enabling it to be used with a mobile phone to access the Internet.

Andy Nott

Shareware Shorts

Steve Litchfield, maintainer of the 3-Lib shareware library, takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion shareware...

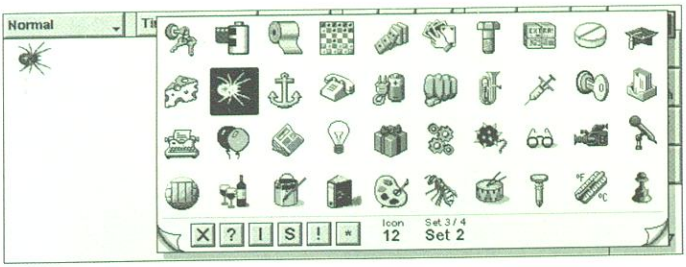
I wandered into the Psion Usenet newsgroups (see page 110) recently and was astounded by some of the logic put forward by one particular individual. He claimed that if software was buggy then the author didn't deserve to sell it, and that it was therefore OK for him to distribute the relevant (hacked) registration codes far and wide.

Quite apart from the question of why he'd want the software in the first place if it was 'buggy', he'd missed one of the central points behind shareware. Yes, the approach of 'trying before you buy' is a useful one, but beyond the distribution method there's another huge difference between shareware and 'big name' commercial software: the people who write it.

Commercial companies generally develop for EPOC as a full-time occupation and by selling their (generally high quality) software at two or three times the price of shareware they manage to cover their overheads and make a profit. Shareware tends to be written by individuals, almost always in their spare time—people who have had a bright idea for an application and then rolled up their sleeves and got programming.

It's true that early versions of some shareware programs have rough edges, inconsistencies and even bugs. But the author will often only be able to polish up the program after getting feedback on things that don't work as expected or that users would like to see added. If you can spare the registration fee at that stage, it's a good way of telling the author that you're fully behind the project and want to support it. You'll usually find shareware authors very responsive, especially via email, and it's not unknown for feedback to evoke a stream of almost daily program updates via the author's web site.

In a niche computer market such as EPOC, the shareware scene is a vital part of the community, and one that needs a little feeding. A culture of 'consumers' who refuse to pay for anything until it's 'perfect' (and are happy to trade illicit registration codes in the meantime) will see more and more applications falling into disrepair and authors disappearing from the scene.



Inserting Sketch icons in seconds using S5mboles

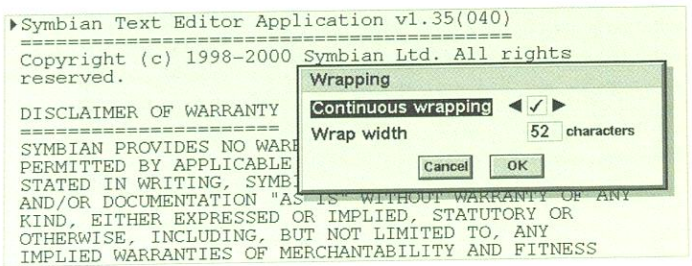
Still ticking over

Although a handful of developers have disappeared in the last few months, the shareware scene is still ticking over nicely, with a dozen or so completely new programs and quite a few updates of existing ones (if only for Revo/Series 7 compatibility).

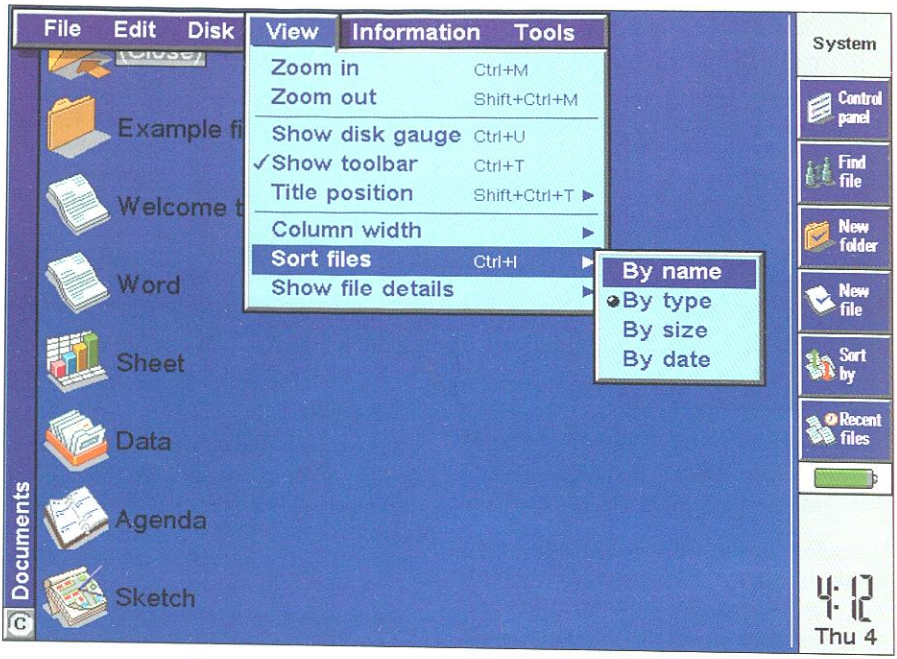
Upgraded significantly in recent weeks, **Huub Linthorst**'s freeware *S5mboles* is long overdue a mention in Shareware Shorts. Although not an application in the strictest sense as it doesn't appear on the Extras bar, it's just as useful. Programmed as a huge macro for the popular Macro5 system, the idea is to paste a small and suitable Sketch icon quickly into any EPOC document. Four 'sheets' of 40 icons are supplied, though you can add more as needed, with custom artwork or symbols. After calling it up in the same way as any other macro, either arrow keys or pen can be used to select an icon and pressing [Enter] or tapping again pastes it into your document. *pnicolas.epocboulevard.com*

The Editor

After starting life as an internal Symbian utility, *Editor* has now been released as freeware, ostensibly to help programmers with Java (and similar) source code. It's also a godsend for lesser mortals though, for viewing the '.TXT' files supplied with other applications and for composing text messages for onward emailing to non-Psion owners, without having to go through Word's import routines or suffer the slow startup of Web. Although other text editors exist for EPOC, this one's official, it's fast and hooks into EPOC's 'Spell check' and 'Word count' functions. On the System screen, files appear with the Editor icon and can be opened directly. The current release has a few minor issues, but these are explained in the documentation. *www.symbiandevnet.com/downloads/Patches.htm*



Symbian's own Editor, now freeware



Careful with those colours! Color Magic in action

Colour schemes

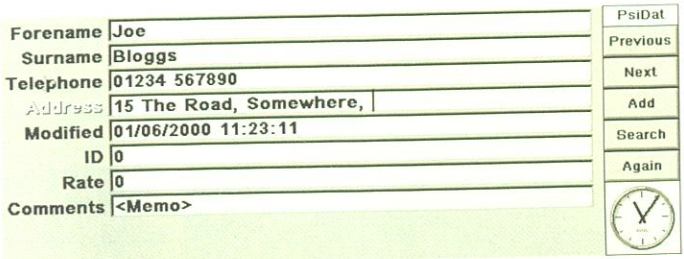
Calling all netBook and Series 7 owners—are you tired of the way menus, dialogs and buttons all still appear in black and white? **Paragon Software**'s *Color Magic* allows you to change the way these and other screen elements look. Both colour and font can be altered to suit your tastes. The Color Magic system is accessed through the main Control panel, with a preview window showing how the current settings will look. A selection of colourful predefined schemes are supplied. *www.epocware.com*

Programmer's delight

Kevin Millican has created a fabulous freeware tool for OPL programmers everywhere. *PsiDat* allows browsing and editing of all OPL (DBMS) data files. You can create standard databases with and without indexes and there's good importing/exporting of Data and delimited text files. Other advanced features include searching using standard SQL queries, the creation of tables containing all 17 EPOC DBMS field types and the import and export of dBase files (including memo fields). For those still struggling with OPL/32's DBMS commands, PsiDat will create example OPL code for creating, opening, reading and writing tables. *website.lineone.net/~millican*

Time AND date

One of the limitations of the Revo's smaller screen is that the standard toolbar clock



Both Data and OPL databases handled in PsiDat

had to be reworked, to show time or date but not both. **Mark Stevenson** got tired of manually tapping on the clock to toggle it between the two settings, and so created the freeware utility *ClokSwp*. This sits in the background and does the switch automatically every five seconds. *www.markstevenson.nildram.co.uk*

Better searching

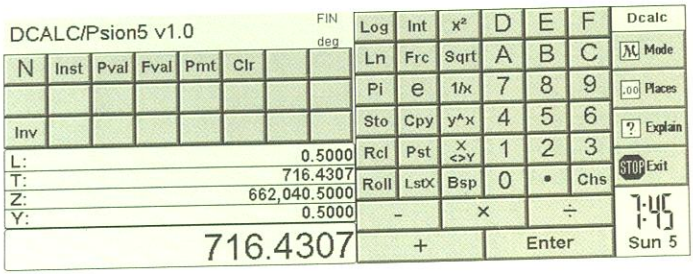
Mark Stevenson has also written *DataSel*, a full blown replacement for Data which supports searching using standard SQL commands, e.g. asking for "Jones or Smith and artist" would match records containing either 'Jones' or both 'Smith' and 'artist'. The utility is freeware, with some rough edges, and feedback is welcomed by the author. *www.markstevenson.nildram.co.uk*

Yet more RPN

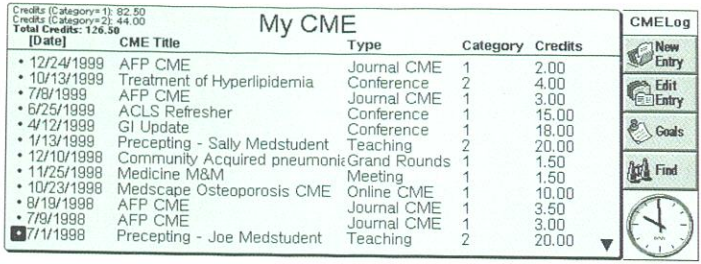
It seems that HP's range of RPN (Reverse Polish Notation) calculators is still as popular as ever, judging from the number of EPOC utilities designed to emulate them. **Bob Hepple** was unhappy with those already available and decided to write his own. *Dcalc* is the result, with big, easy-to-see keys and a full set of stack manipulation keys, just like a real HP calculator. It's integrated with the Psion clipboard too, so you can cut and paste numbers to and from other applications. *www.bit.net.au/~bhepple/dcalc/psion*

Tracking those credits

Kimo Hirayama's freeware *CMELog* allows professionals to track their continuing education credits easily. You can also customise it to track distribution requirements for university students. The initial settings are prima-



A calculator you'll either love or hate—Dcalc


Credits (Category=1): 82.50
Credits (Category=2): 44.00
Total Credits: 126.50
My CME
[Date] CME Title Type Category Credits
• 12/24/1999 AFP CME Journal CME 1 2.00
• 10/13/1999 Treatment of Hyperlipidemia Conference 2 4.00
• 7/8/1999 AFP CME Journal CME 1 3.00
• 6/25/1999 ACLS Refresher Conference 1 15.00
• 4/12/1999 GI Update Conference 1 18.00
• 1/13/1999 Precepting - Sally Medstudent Teaching 2 20.00
• 12/10/1998 Community Acquired pneumonia Grand Rounds 1 1.50
• 11/25/1998 Medicine M&M Meeting 1 1.50
• 10/23/1998 Medscape Osteoporosis CME Online CME 1 10.00
• 8/19/1998 AFP CME Journal CME 1 3.50
• 7/9/1998 AFP CME Journal CME 1 3.00
7/1/1998 Precepting - Joe Medstudent Teaching 2 20.00
CMELog
New Entry
Edit Entry
Goals
Find

A very well qualified doctor, chronicled in CMELog

rily oriented toward medical professionals but are easily changed. *www.palmaris.com*

Node mapping

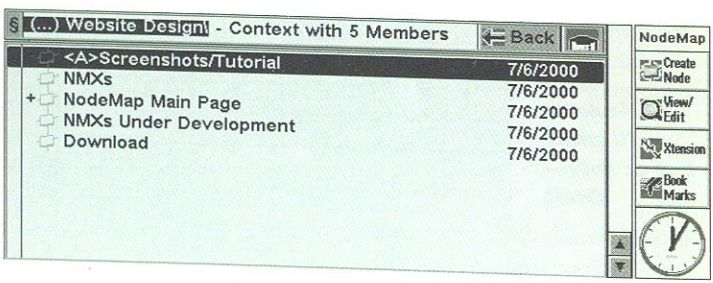
Dave Eggleston's *NodeMap* is a hierarchical note taking tool. Each note is defined as a node, which has a 'parent' node and any number of 'children'. This means that you can map out ideas into constituent parts to explore further. Applications for NodeMap might include creating lists, organising notes or planning out a program structure. Nodes can also be contexts, links, or search nodes. Context and search nodes provide dynamic focus points in your data. While they do not have children of their own, they are used to display 'flat' views of selected nodes regardless of their hierarchical position. A link allows you to link to, and launch, most standard files on your EPOC machine. Each normal node is represented as an icon which changes to represent the relative age of the node and the length of time since it was last used. We'll be reviewing NodeMap in a future issue. *www.mirrorkill.f9.co.uk*

Your snap-happy friend

Photopal, by **Peter Csutora**, is a simple collection of utilities designed for serious amateur or professional photographers. It calculates depth of field, flash distance, flash aperture and bounce distance and angle, close-up ratio, luminescence values and focal length. It also has a built-in, audible second ticker for bulb timing. *www.pocketiq.com*

Gameboy emulator

BacklitGames have produced *Goby*, a working Gameboy emulator for EPOC, allowing games written for Nintendo's Gameboy to be played. Cartridges obviously cannot be played (there's nowhere to plug them in), but Goby can instead load 'ROM images', which are exact duplicates of the information on a cartridge. These can be



Planning out the NodeMap web site using the tool itself

JWIN

FEATURED UPDATE!

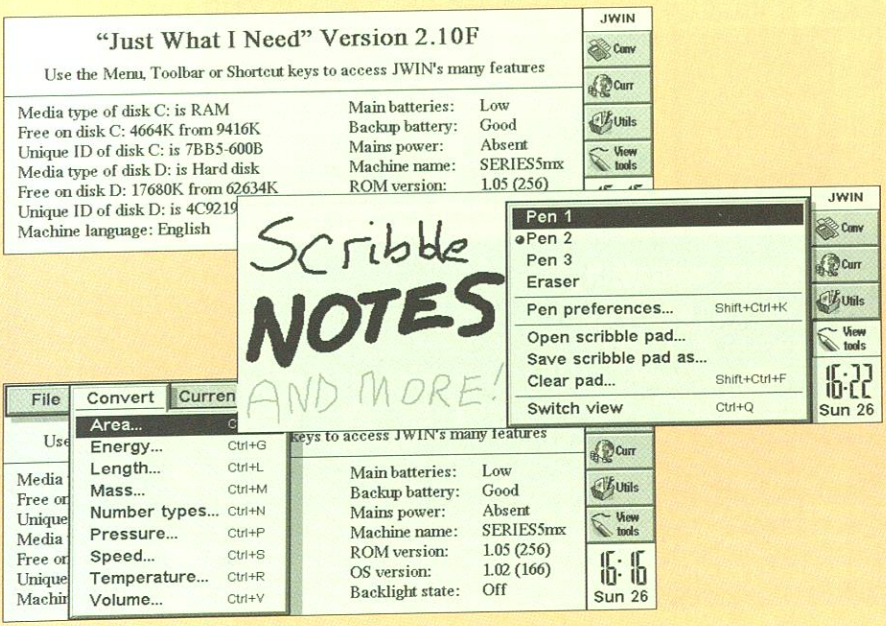
Yet another application which has survived from the early days of the Series 3a and also grown along the way, along with its author, **Phil Spencer**. Phil, who now works for Symbian, was only 13 years old when he started writing JWIN, which has recently been updated to version 2.10F.

Standing for "Just What I Need", it's a personal selection of conversions and utilities that will appeal to anyone looking for a 'swiss army knife' approach to their Psion or EPOC computer.

Working in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch, JWIN offers:

- In-depth information on the internals of your palmtop.
- A 'scribble' pad for doodles and quick jottings.
- Conversion routines for a large number of neatly-categorised units, many of them quite obscure.
- Data tables for a number of common items, including ASCII codes, clothes sizes, Morse code and the phonetic alphabet.
- Many configuration options for launching and using the application.

v2.10F adds a number of functions, including integration with the System clipboard, scribble pad loading and saving, a configurable lottery number generator and support for the Revo and Series 7/netBook.



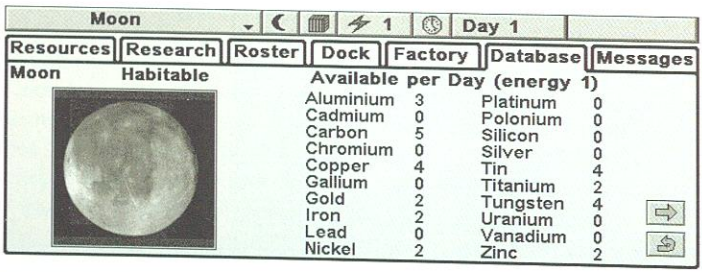
downloaded from the Internet via various web sites. There is currently no sound emulation in Goby, but the developers are working on it. *www.backlitgames.com*

Stardate 26732.2

"The Sun is going Super Nova, you have 1000 days to explore the Solar System, exploit its mineral wealth and develop the technology to create Probes, Tugs, Bulk Cruisers, Mining Bases and more. Your ultimate goal is to create a Space Ark fitted with Warp Drive so that mankind can survive amongst the stars." Or so begins **Ben Vaughan**'s new Series 5/5mx game, *Stardate*. If the plot sounds familiar, it's because this is Nick Dawkins' old game, revised and updated, with high quality sound effects, smaller disk and memory requirements and faster operation. In addition, the game is now more challenging and exciting due to a 1000 day time limit in which to get everything done, plus there are a few surprises added. *www.bjv.btinternet.co.uk*

Mr clever

FreEPOC's *Mr Matt* is a familiar puzzle game (similar to Boulderdash) in which you control the eponymous hero, digging through earth to reach apples while avoiding being crushed under rocks. It's a pure strategy game, played out on over 100 different rock field and skill level combinations. As with all FreEPOC releases, it's of course freeware. A Windows version is also available, with a plain text level format that means anyone can start designing their own game levels. *www.freepoc.de*



Aiming at the moon in Stardate

Shareware availability

Please note that, by definition, many of the latest items featured in Shareware Shorts will *not* appear on existing Palmtop CDs, but on subsequent pressings of the disk. If you wish to receive every edition of the CD then see page 141 for details. To find the latest version of the programs mentioned here, go to the relevant author's web site as given in the text.

The vast majority of EPOC applications mentioned in Shareware Shorts run properly on the Psion Series 7, Series 5/5mx, Revo and compatibles, unless otherwise stated. If a program misbehaves on *your* EPOC computer, check the author's web site first and then email them if necessary.

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is often supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software you are then asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are freeware and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

Where can I find it?

One way to get any of these programs is from the Internet. If you've got access to the web there are several on-line indices which link directly to the relevant author download page concerned.

Things are actually even easier if you haven't got Internet access. As long as the program concerned has been out for a month or so, you should find a copy on the latest edition of the Palmtop CD-ROM, indexed into the appropriate category.

How do I use it?

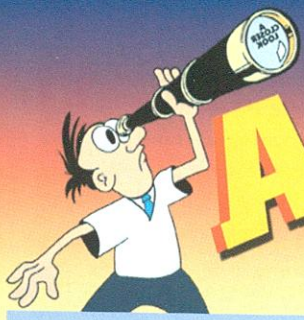
Once you've found the file you want, there are three steps you may need to take:

1. Decompress the files if necessary. If you're new to computers you may not be familiar with compression. Psion applications normally have more than one component (e.g. the program itself, help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware on the Internet is most commonly compressed in 'Zip' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP' at the end of the filename. Before you can install and run the program you need to extract these files with an 'unzip' program, which is freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for PKUNZIP, Windows users can use Winzip, and Mac users should try ZipIt or the commercial Stuffit Deluxe. You can also unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using RMRZip, from www.rmrsoft.com - see page 39 of this issue.

2. Copy the files. You'll probably now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion. To do this you'll need some external hardware, such as the PsiWin or EPOC Connect link cable. Normally one of the unzipped software files is a text file (e.g. README.TXT), which can be read by any word processor. It explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion. Look out for any special SIS files, which can be double-clicked on for really easy installation.

   See 'The Installation Game' in issues 14/15 and 'Installing software - the easy way' in issue 21 for a more comprehensive discussion of the above procedures.

3. The newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar. Press the 'Extras' application icon to check and to launch the software.



A Closer Look

...at some of the newest and most interesting products for your palmtop

Star Ratings:

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Fair
★☆☆☆☆ Poor
☆☆☆☆☆ Dismal

Interpreting reviews

Quality: the *Quality* star rating reflects how well the product works, whether it includes all the features you'd expect, whether the interface is consistent and easy to use, and in data-based software products it also reflects the quality of the information contained in the program.

Value: the *Value* star rating reflects the value for money of the product, taken within the context of what the program (or other product) does. Therefore a simple utility program will be rated differently to a sophisticated application at the same price.

Does it work on my palmtop?

Items reviewed should work with the Psion Revo, Series 5/5mx, Series 7/netBook and Ericsson MC218 unless otherwise specified, though some programs may not currently support colour or utilise the full screen of the Series 7 and netBook.

Programs *may* run on the Oregon Scientific Osaris, though part of the display may be clipped due to the Osaris' smaller 320x200 pixel screen. Osaris users should always consult the program developer before purchasing.

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Michelin Red Guide 25
Probert Encyclopaedia 28
XConverter 29
Psion WAP browser 32
TrueTerm Thesaurus 34

Opera

Opera has built a reputation for being fast, small (compared to other Windows PC browsers) and sticking closely to HTML standards. It has also been ported to several non-PC operating systems. The pre-release beta copy that was reviewed briefly in issue 28 has now moved on to a full release, based on Version 3.62 of the Windows code, and is available in both ER3 and ER5 EPOC versions. The former is for the Series 5 'Classic' and Geofox One, while the latter works on more recent machines such as the 5mx, Series 7/netBook and Revo.

Opera takes around 1.8MB of disk space when installed (twice as much as the Psion Web application) and can easily consume another 3.5MB of memory when running, effectively ruling out using it on current versions of the Revo. Now released as shareware, it times out after 30 days.

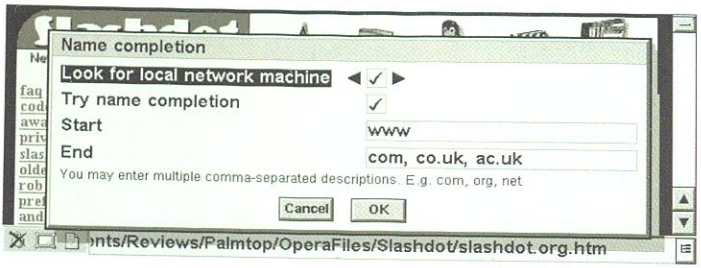
The EPOC port has been officially licensed by Psion and is now available at *www.enterprise.psion.com/partners/download.htm* in a customised version that defaults to the full registered product when run on a Series 7 or netBook, but remains as unregistered shareware on other computers. If you download the Psion version, note that you have to go through a free registration process in order to access the downloads area.

Once installed, Opera sensibly intercepts System screen taps on HTML files (on the ER5 computers, at least), firing up Opera instead of the built-in Web application.

One irritating thing about Opera is that it's still not 'finished'. The help file is inaccurate and some menu options don't work. A prime example is the 'Save pages and images...' command, which only saves the page itself, ignoring all the images. Like Psion's Web, there's also no way of printing the displayed page. And as you can't save the page and images together, you can't even transfer the file set to a desktop computer for viewing and printing. Nor can you get anything more than a rudimentary printout by copying and pasting the page into Word, because only the text is copied, with no styles, fonts, graphics, etc. The best you can manage is to take screen shots of displayed page sections and then print these later from Sketch.

All rather unsatisfactory, especially as the help file clearly says that [Ctrl]+[P] will print the page. Mind you, it also says that [Alt]+[F3] will view the document frame source, and as no Psion palmtops even *have* [Alt] or [F3] keys, the help text must be a hangover from the Windows PC version. There's also a mysterious 'Turbo Mode'

A new look for HTML files on the System screen



Configuring 'name completion'

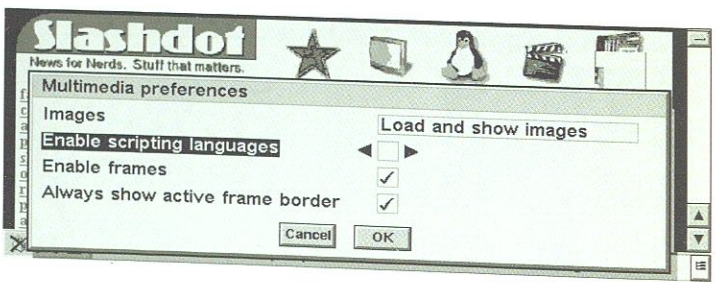
option in 'Cache preferences | Miscellaneous', but there's no explanation of what it does and no noticeable change in the speed of rendering a page with it turned on.

On the other hand, there are plenty of good features that you'd normally expect only on desktop browsers, such as the ability to configure almost every aspect of the browser to your liking. This includes the auto-completion of web site names, so typing "opera" in the URL line can get expanded automatically to "http://www.opera.com/".

One improvement from the beta versions is the ability to navigate links with the keyboard, using the [Q] and [A] keys to move between them, although Opera still doesn't show you each link's destination. It's also difficult to see where the highlight is on the rather dull Series 5mx screen. Having no idea of where a link might be taking you is especially confusing if it's a 'mailto:' link, as there's no connection between Opera and the Email application—so nothing happens.

One of the web features added by Opera is JavaScript, but as I commented in my last review, one major omission in the beta release was the option to turn it off. Just as some web sites try to detect the type of browser being used, some also detect JavaScript capability. The two main desktop browsers use different interpretations of the JavaScript language and so things that are possible in Internet Explorer won't necessarily work in Netscape Navigator, and vice versa. The JavaScript used by Opera is version 1.0, instead of the v1.3 used by current versions of the big two desktop browsers, and this can cause problems on some sites.

Two prime examples are the Financial Times and BT sites, at *www.ft.com* and *www.bt.com* respectively. The FT site stubbornly insisted on telling me to download Internet Explorer or Netscape and refused to let Opera in. BT simply gave a blank screen. Given these unwelcome responses I feared that I would



Some sites work better with 'scripting languages' turned off

jungle.com
jungle shops
jungle beat
jungle vision
jungle play
jungle computers
Digital Photos' to your Doorstep
My jungle
My Details
Jungle Jewels
Order Tracking
Jungle Mania
Free Services
Information
Help
Credit Card Security Guarantee
Order by phone
Legal
if you are not Mr John Woodthorpe click here
Search jungle...
Search
Help Me?
View our weekly newsletter, jungleDrums, and subscribe to have it delivered to your inbox.
jungle Drums
WHICH? WEB TRADER
Special buy of the week
Rev Scan R48Ti A4 USB Flatbed Inc Transparency Adapter
The Rev Scan R48TOI features 48-Bit colour depth, 19200dpi Resolution, 512K cache memory, USB, scans slides and films and has four quick action buttons.
All these amazing features at an exceptional price.
Info
jungle price
£59.98 inc. VAT
ADD
Computers - click here to view other Computer products
CD-R 650mb 74 Mins 100 pack card sleeves
Beat - click here to view other Beat products
Elbow Beach by Louise
Louise's excellent third album
and much more . . .
View Shopping Basket
http://www.jungle.com/member_sidenav.html

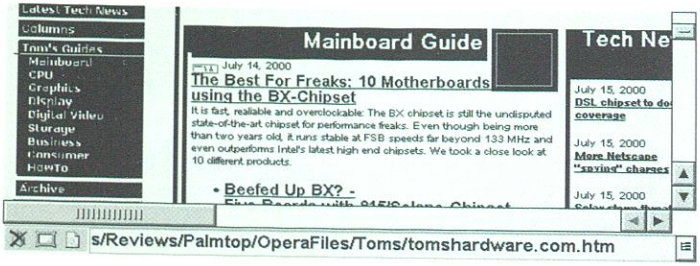
In the Jungle with only Opera and a Series 7/netBook for protection

be unable to access them. With the new ability to turn off JavaScript however, I could navigate easily around the BT site, including entering the secure areas to view my phone bill and change account details. Unfortunately, that turned out to be *all* I could do, as one of the forms that gives customers access to their account details has a button that uses JavaScript, even though it's ostensibly in the non-JavaScript version of the site! Re-enabling JavaScript once past the browser identity check on the front page fixed the problem though, and I was then able to proceed further.

I tried out Opera's cookie and SSL support with a range of 'secure' sites, including checking my account at *www.jungle.com* and accessing my Open University record. Both are a good test, as the former uses a complex array of frames with the secure site being held within the frames, with the latter relying on a combination of cookies and SSL. Opera coped well with them both, although it did seem to get stuck in the Jungle site at one point.

This also revealed a frustrating effect of JavaScript within the EPOC interface, in that any 'pop-up' window replaces the original and removes all its history, so the 'Go back' facility doesn't work (the page is effectively new and there's nowhere to go back to).

ER5's Java plug-in now works within Opera, although it's also very memory hungry, taking as much as 8MB to run.


Latest Tech News
Columns
Tom's Guides
Mainboard
CPU
Graphics
Display
Digital Video
Storage
Business
Consumer
HowTo
Archive
Mainboard Guide
July 14, 2000
The Best For Freaks: 10 Motherboards using the BX-Chipset
It is fast, reliable and overclockable: The BX chipset is still the undisputed state-of-the-art chipset for performance freaks. Even though being more than two years old, it runs stable at FSB speeds far beyond 133 MHz and even outperforms Intel's latest high end chipsets. We took a close look at 10 different products.
• Beefed Up BX? -
Tech Ne
July 15, 2000
DSL chipset to do coverage
July 15, 2000
More Netscape "spying" charges
July 15, 2000
s/Reviews/Palmtop/OperaFiles/Toms/tomshardware.com.htm

Tom's Hardware, a severe test

Speed of rendering pages is obviously one of the attractions of Opera and the following tests were done on three different computers running Opera from a CF card. The pages and images were saved using a desktop computer and then loaded across onto the test computer's internal drive. The times to finish displaying the last image are given in the tables below.

Tom's Hardware page is composed of tables within tables, and places heavy demands on Psion's Web software. Even when the page has fully loaded it is very poorly displayed and hard to read, because of the need to scroll long distances both horizontally and vertically. Opera is both faster and more accurate in dealing with the same page. The Palmtop magazine home page is simpler but still uses tables. Tables aren't the only factor involved though—by way of comparison, a simple 50K HTML page of plain text (with no tables or pictures) took 10 seconds to

Speed differences between Web and Opera when accessing Palmtop web site *(www.palmtop.co.uk/palmtop.htm)* **(see text)**				**Speed increase with Opera**
Series 5 Web	1 min 18 sec	**Series 5 Opera**	50 sec	**156%**
5mx Web	40 seconds	**5mx Opera**	20 seconds	**200%**
netBook Web	11 seconds	**netBook Opera**	5 seconds	**220%**

Speed differences between Web and Opera when accessing Tom's Hardware (*www.tomshardware.com*) **(see text)**				**Speed increase with Opera**
Series 5 Web	80 minutes	**Series 5 Opera**	5 mins	**1600%**
5mx Web	1 min 50 sec	**5mx Opera**	1 min 30 sec	**22%**
netBook Web	1 min 3 sec	**netBook Opera**	25 seconds	**252%**

display in Web on the Series 5mx and four seconds in Opera.

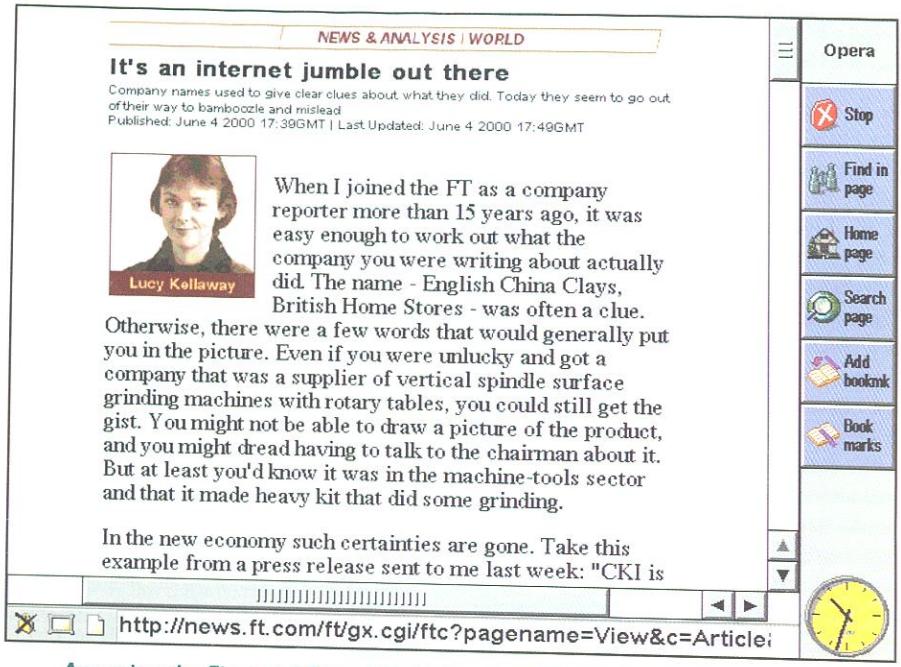
According to the Opera publicity material, the EPOC port relies heavily on the original Windows code. It would have been a huge effort to restructure this code and adapt it for EPOC, so it was decided that the best compromise would be to emulate the Windows environment, leaving the basic Opera source code untouched. Now that the EPOC port of version 3.62 has been formally released, the programming team are concentrating their efforts on producing a 'proper' EPOC port of the current version 4 for Windows. This is more stable, includes a WAP browser plus a news and email client, as well as more 'faking choices' (see boxout, right), support for HTML 4.0 and XML, together with a better JavaScript implementation. The release information supplied with Opera suggests that the EPOC port of version 4 will have many of these features, although it doesn't specifically mention the news and mail client.

So is Opera worth paying for? Psion's standard Web client is very basic but is fairly robust and free for everyone. Opera is free for Series 7 and netBook owners, who will benefit the most from using it, given the larger screens and more powerful processors. Series 5 'Classic' and Series 5mx owners have a bigger decision to make as to whether to part with cash after the evaluation period. The registration fee of $39 (or $15 if you have already registered Opera on another platform) isn't a huge sum and there's a 50% discount for students. However, many people regard a web browser as being part of the operating system 'furniture' and therefore expect it to be free. The larger memory requirements of Opera compared to Web mean that the

Sniffing and faking it

The original intention of the World Wide Web was that it should be open to all, a concept that's still vigorously advocated by its inventor, Tim Berners-Lee of the World Wide Web Consortium. He's adamant that designing sites for specific browsers is bad for both users and site owners. Despite this, some authors create different versions of their pages, one set for Internet Explorer and another for Netscape Navigator, each making use of browser-specific tags and attributes.

In order to send each visitor to the appropriate set of pages automatically, the identity string that every browser sends out is acted upon. If browsers don't identify themselves as either of the 'big two', visitors are usually sent to a page telling them to download another browser, with no regard to whether it is actually necessary or appropriate. Consequently, many smaller web browsers fake their identity by 'telling lies' to the pages being visited. Opera follows this route, giving the choice of claiming to be either Mozilla V4.51 or V3.0 (in other words, version 4 or version 3 of Netscape). If you go to *www.privacy.net/analyze* you will see the declarations it makes, including the fact that Opera 3.62 is declared as being used with a screen size of 640x480. In addition, to access some sites it is sometimes necessary to set up JavaScript faking as well, which Opera 3.62 can't do. Version 4 should be more capable and we'll review it in more detail when it's finally released.


NEWS & ANALYSIS | WORLD
It's an internet jumble out there
Company names used to give clear clues about what they did. Today they seem to go out of their way to bamboozle and mislead
Published: June 4 2000 17:39GMT | Last Updated: June 4 2000 17:49GMT
Lucy Kellaway
When I joined the FT as a company reporter more than 15 years ago, it was easy enough to work out what the company you were writing about actually did. The name - English China Clays, British Home Stores - was often a clue. Otherwise, there were a few words that would generally put you in the picture. Even if you were unlucky and got a company that was a supplier of vertical spindle surface grinding machines with rotary tables, you could still get the gist. You might not be able to draw a picture of the product, and you might dread having to talk to the chairman about it. But at least you'd know it was in the machine-tools sector and that it made heavy kit that did some grinding.
In the new economy such certainties are gone. Take this example from a press release sent to me last week: "CKI is
Opera
Stop
Find in page
Home page
Search page
Add bookmk
Book marks
http://news.ft.com/ft/gx.cgi/ftc?pagename=View&c=Article

Accessing the Financial Times' web site, after a little JavaScript juggling...

major attraction has to be the access to secure sites and the increased speed. The JavaScript support is generally not a great advantage at the moment, but if the secure sites you want to use will let Opera in then it's a worthwhile purchase. If you only browse rarely and don't care about secure sites, all you'll gain is a bit of time. If you still have a Series 5 'Classic' and want to access web sites that include tables, frames, cookies or SSL security then you really should get Opera—especially if you're a fan of Tom's Hardware Guide!

John Woodthorpe

Opera

From: Electronic download from *www.opera.com*

Availability: Now

Runs on: All current EPOC models (subject to available memory)

Price: $39 or less (see main text)

Quality	★★★½☆
Value	See above

Michelin Red Guide

Palmtop Software seem to have developed the conversion of paper reference works into EPOC applications into something of an art form. Certainly, as far the interface is concerned, this is on a par with Halliwell's Film and Video Guide, Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, etc. The Michelin Red Guide is one of the top European hotel and restaurant guides, and with its pioneering system of 'icons for everything' is ideally suited for a computer implementation.

The biggest disappointment with this product is the coverage area: only 70 of Europe's biggest cities. While 70 may initially sound like a lot, you typically get only half a dozen for each country, with Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland and Portugal only represented by their capitals. Even the best covered country, France, is limited to 10 cities, not including the one I wanted to look up for work purposes (Toulouse). Given current CompactFlash memory sizes and prices, and given that installing all 70 cities only needs 2.5MB, the Michelin Red Guide's coverage seems more than a little sparse.

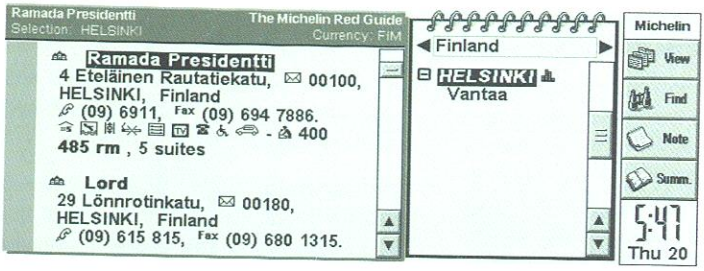
If your travel plans include one of the cities covered though, you're supplied with a lot of useful information. The interface is a little clumsy in places, but it's still quite fun to 'drill down' through the 6500 hotels and restaurants to select the city required and then the ratings and facilities needed.

The 'Find' system, as with previous Palmtop Software products, is where most of the application's power lies. There's a primary dialog in which you can specify such basic parameters as price and cuisine ratings, although the only choices for the former are 'Moderate', 'Average' or 'Expensive', which is a pity given that actual price information is part of the guide's database.

Tapping on 'More options...' presents a tabbed dialog for fine tuning your search, including (rather vague) 'category' descriptions, credit card acceptance information and, most importantly, the specification of specific facilities. For example, looking for a hotel in Edinburgh that has both a garden *and* swimming pool selected two of the 115 hotels listed in the city. Searches typically take a second or two, with a progress bar to keep you informed and an animated cartoon cut-scene to keep you entertained.

Once selected, tapping on an item presents the full Michelin Red Guide entry, including address and contact details, facility icons, number of rooms and (importantly) minimum and maximum prices. Although at first the tiny icons are more than a

Making a detailed search based on hotel facilities



Some selected hotels in Helsinki

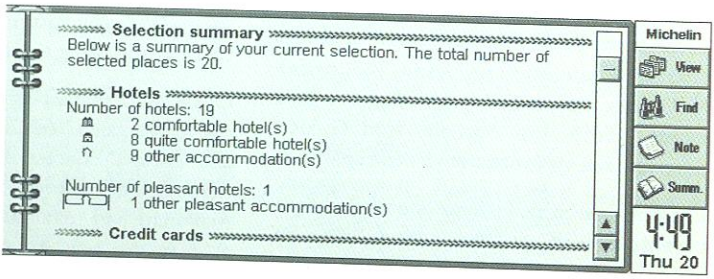
little intimidating, things get a lot easier when you realise that double-tapping any of them brings up an appropriate explanatory legend.

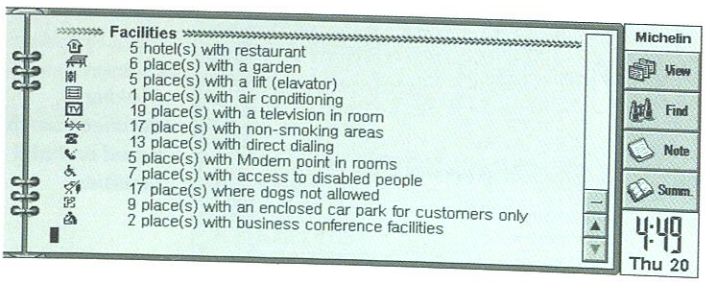
When searching for restaurants, I found the options disappointing. There's no way just to search for restaurants of a specific type (e.g. "Italian") and the facility filters were identical to those for hotels—a restaurant with a modem point, hydrotherapy room and landing stage, anyone?

A limitation of Michelin guides in general rather than Palmtop Software's electronic version in particular, many of the restaurants that most people would frequent are simply missing, in favour of the more 'up-market' *haute cuisine* establishments. Which is odd, given that the hotel database includes *all* types of accommodation, right down to budget roadside travel lodges.

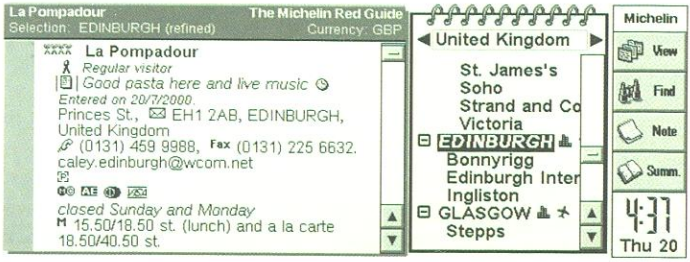
A useful summary screen gives an overview of all the hotels and restaurants selected, although having been told that some of the selected locations had a specific facility it would have been sensible to be able to tap on the appropriate line to show just those locations.

The top...

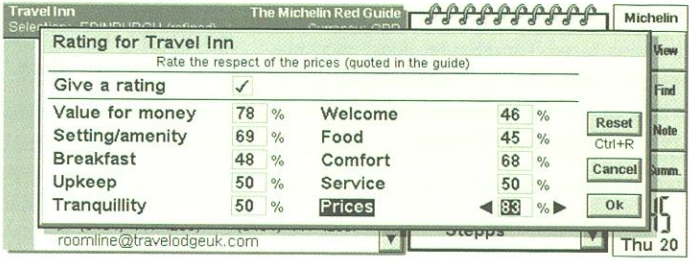



Facilities
5 hotel(s) with restaurant
6 place(s) with a garden
5 place(s) with a lift (elavator)
1 place(s) with air conditioning
19 place(s) with a television in room
17 place(s) with non-smoking areas
13 place(s) with direct dialing
5 place(s) with Modem point in rooms
7 place(s) with access to disabled people
17 place(s) where dogs not allowed
9 place(s) with an enclosed car park for customers only
2 place(s) with business conference facilities
Michelin
View
Find
Note
Summ.
4:49
Thu 20

...and bottom of the selection summary screen



Seeing your personal comments appear in the main display



Giving a hotel a detailed rating

Very welcome indeed are facilities to add your own opinions into the database. Multi-line notes can be added to any entry, e.g. "Good pasta and live music", and percentage ratings can be input for such things as 'Value for money', 'Welcome', 'Service', etc. Once entered, both your notes and a new line of (yet more) icons appear in the main entry display. Tapping on any of these icons pops up its meaning and the rating you gave it.

For those who wish to plan their travel in advance, I liked the way selections of hotels and restaurants could be saved. They can then be restored at a later date for more detailed perusal.

There's no paper manual yet again, following the modern trend—a small HTML file on the CD unfortunately has to suffice. A plain text version of this forms the online help, although it's implemented as a single stream of text and is neither indexed nor searchable.

Provided that you're far more interested in finding good hotels than restaurants and that your itinerary stays within the 70 cities covered, the Michelin Red Guide is an efficient resource to tuck away on your palmtop. Not for the budget tourist, perhaps, but recommended for the travelling businessperson.

Steve Litchfield

Michelin Red Guide

From: PalmTop Software
www.palmtop.nl

Availability: Now

Runs on: All current EPOC models

Price: £35

Quality ★★★☆☆

Value ★★★☆☆

Probert Encyclopaedia

Although not a product in the usual sense of the word, this encyclopaedia is noteworthy because of both its size (85,000 entries) and contemporary content. The Probert Encyclopaedia is distributed as a TomeRaider (reviewed in issue 29) database, so you can take advantage of faster indexing and searching than would normally be possible if this was a standalone application. Unlike previous large TomeRaider files, this one is a port of a modern-day reference work, in this case a huge encyclopaedic database created by Matthew Probert.

Reflecting the fact that it was largely created by one man (over a period of 20 years - see *www.probert-encyclopaedia.co.uk* for more details), the entries focus on specific speciality fields, often those which wouldn't be included in a mainstream encyclopaedia. For example, there are large numbers of USA gazetteer entries, actor names, details of specific computer viruses, weapons, slang terms and acronyms. Browsing throws up a number of interesting curiosities: taking a section at random reveals an entry for 'Goalkeeper' that's nothing to do with football—apparently it's a shipborne weapons system. Searching for "Refrigeration" is left without a direct match whereas there are detailed entries for four different variants of the rather obscure 'Reflection' terminal emulation program and a reference to a town called 'Refugio' in Texas.

Searching can be done in a number of ways. Starting to type in a keyword is quick-matched instantly on-screen to the appropriate place in the alphabetical index. Using TomeRaider's 'Find' function allows searching by partial word or phrase, either in the index only or within the 5MB of compressed entry text. A full search through every word in the encyclopaedia takes about 40 seconds on a Series 5mx.

The encyclopaedia itself is free, though you'll need a registered copy of TomeRaider in order to view it. Although covering a fairly eclectic slice of human knowledge, the Probert Encyclopaedia may still be a useful resource for anyone with 6MB to spare.

Steve Litchfield

Probert Encyclopaedia

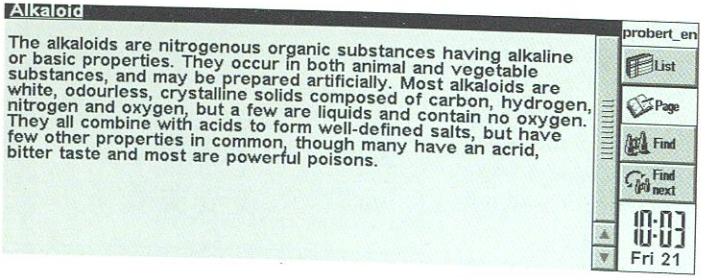
From: Palm-Tec *www.tomeraider.com*

Availability: Now

Runs on: all current EPOC models

Price: FREE

Quality	★★★☆☆
Value	N/A (FREE)


Alkaloid
The alkaloids are nitrogenous organic substances having alkaline or basic properties. They occur in both animal and vegetable substances, and may be prepared artificially. Most alkaloids are white, odourless, crystalline solids composed of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen, but a few are liquids and contain no oxygen. They all combine with acids to form well-defined salts, but have few other properties in common, though many have an acrid, bitter taste and most are powerful poisons.
probert_en
List
Page
Find
Find next
10:03
Fri 21

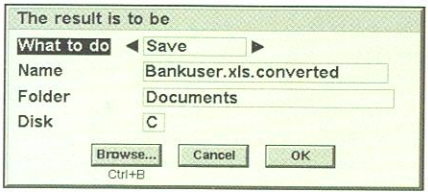
Something a little out of the ordinary—the Probert Encyclopaedia

PREVIEW

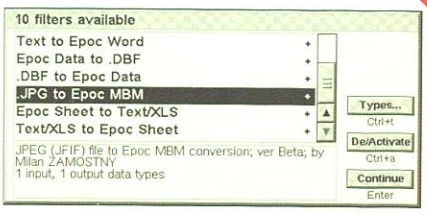
XConverter

XConverter seems to be the program that many mobile computer users have dreamed of. Until now, if you wanted to exchange EPOC documents with something running a different operating system, such as a desktop computer, you'd have been in dangerous territory. If you own a PC then you're in a fairly good position, as long as your desktop is loaded with an up-to-date copy of PsiWin. If you own a computer running something other than Windows (such as MacOS, Linux or BeOS), conversion of your Word or Sheet files to the format of your choice has always been a problem. Even converting a Word document to a common format such as RTF isn't possible, let alone anything as elaborate as converting Sheet to XLS (Microsoft Excel), or Data to dBase or FoxPro formats.

XConverter appears to be the answer, allowing you to convert between a handful of common formats without the need for a direct connection to any other computer. This is likely to be of immense use to anyone without a PC, working with Internet files, or needing to send and receive standard file formats by email. Most conversions work in both direction, and the number of supported formats is set to grow. The version reviewed here allows conversion of the following:



Selecting the output format

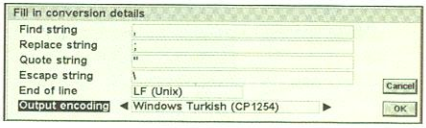


Built-in filters

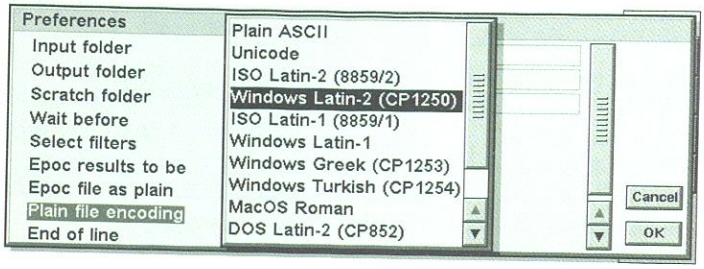
- EPOC Word from/to RTF, HTML and TXT.
- EPOC Data from/to dBase III+, FoxPro and delimited text.
- EPOC Sheet from/to CSV (delimited text) and Microsoft XLS 2.1.
- EPOC Jotter from/to TXT.
- JPEG images to MBM (EPOC pictures).

A plain text to plain text filter is also supplied for situations where you need to convert from one of several encoding tables to another, such as ISO-Latin2 (Code page 1250) to Unicode, or MacOS Roman to plain ASCII. This will prove exceptionally useful to anyone needing to convert to a non-PC format, especially when used in conjunction with XConverter's function to 'find and replace' strings, perhaps swapping to a different delimiting or end-of-line character.

Using the application is straightforward—file selection is done in the usual way and a dialog prompts with the available conversion options. Putting XConverter through



Text-to-text conversion



Available code pages

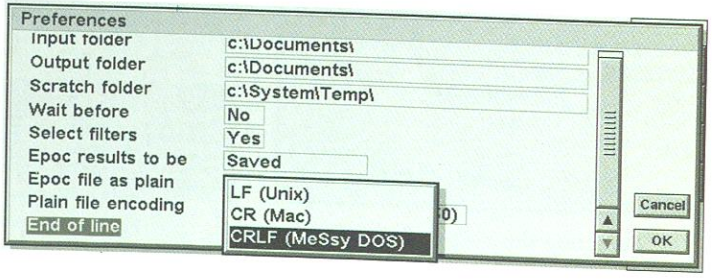
its paces generally proved a satisfying experience. Here are a few of the conversions I tried on my Revo, Series 5mx and Series 7, with their results:

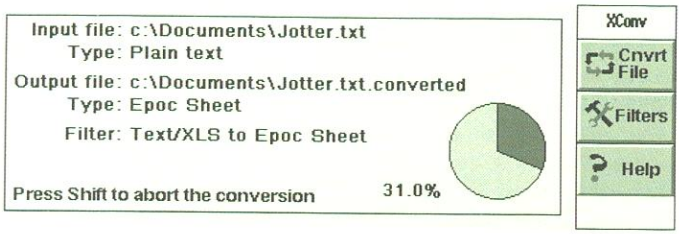
- A 9K HTML document with one table was converted to EPOC Word in just over a minute. Results were mostly good: the table was transformed into plain text, though images were not shown and some of the more esoteric formatting was lost.
- A 25K EPOC Word file was converted to RTF (with options to select a code page, etc.) perfectly in a matter of seconds.
- A dBase V address book file containing just under 500 entries took one and a half minutes to convert to EPOC Data. It all worked perfectly and the conversion correctly picked up the field names from the DBF file, something that PsiWin always had problems with.
- A complex 12K Sheet file took just over a minute to convert to XLS 2.1 format (offering to convert my formulæ), and opened perfectly in Excel 2000.
- A 150K JPEG image converted to an 'EPOC picture' greyscale image (the option for colour was also given) in around five seconds with perfect results.

There are some limitations, of course: embedded objects (such as Sketches or Sheets in Word) are not supported, the XLS filter doesn't convert 'IF' and 'CHOOSE' functions, the JPG conversion is only one-way, the Series 7/netBook version doesn't support colour, and there are some problems with the screen layout and dialog boxes when run on the Revo. Revo users or those short on space should note that installation of XConverter takes around 1MB.

Plans for the product's future apparently include more graphic formats, further improvement of the EPOC Word conversions (including support for images and other embedded objects), Microsoft Word

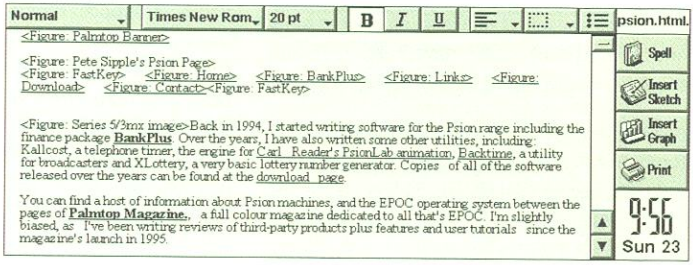
Note the subtle end-of-line joke!





Conversion in progress on a Revo (note the toolbar)

Results of an HTML-to-Word conversion



import, improved XLS conversion, plus direct Agenda and Contacts conversion.

The best news of all is that the product is extensible, with X-Soft announcing the release of an XConversion development kit that will allow other developers to write new conversion filters or to use existing filters in their own applications to export/import data.

At the time of writing, the version used for this article (v1.0 prerelease Beta 1) was available as a free download with a suitable expiry date. It was mostly stable, although using very large documents or unsupported formats did tend to produce errors. Although there is always room for improvement, the conversions were generally of good quality and the results were impressive.

In its release version the XConverter program will be free of charge, with the conversion filters purchased separately.

As someone who's been frustrated in the past with convertors in general, it's refreshing to see a solution that's not PC-based. The release of XConverter, together with the tools to allow others to develop new conversion filters, is a welcome and long overdue addition to the EPOC platform.

Pete Sipple

XConverter

From: X-Soft
www.x-soft.cz/xconverter.htm

Availability: August 2000 promised

Runs on: All current ER5 models

Price: TBA

Quality	n/a (beta release only)
Value	n/a (beta release only)

PREVIEW

Psion WAP browser

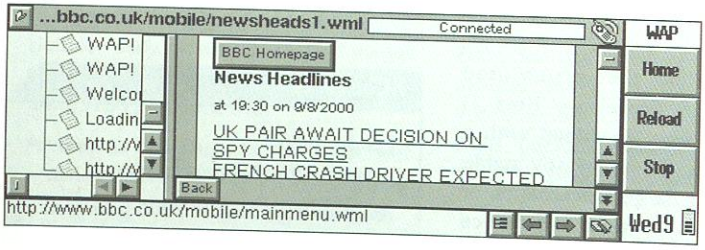
One of the main differences between the Psion Series 5mx and the Ericsson MC218 is that the latter was released with a WAP browser (see issues 24 and 26 for details), unfortunately written to run only on a genuine MC218. At long last, Psion have created a WAP browser for the rest of us. It first appeared as a beta release in June and subsequent betas have followed, but the full version is due for imminent release.

Although originally written to work with the Revo, it will also function perfectly with the 5mx and Series 7/netBook. Before using the browser you'll need to set up an account with a WAP Service Provider. If you already have an account you can of course use the settings for that, but if not then Fonedata (who have just been acquired by Psion, see page 4) offer a free WAP gateway. Instructions for setting up a Fonedata account are in the boxout on the following page.

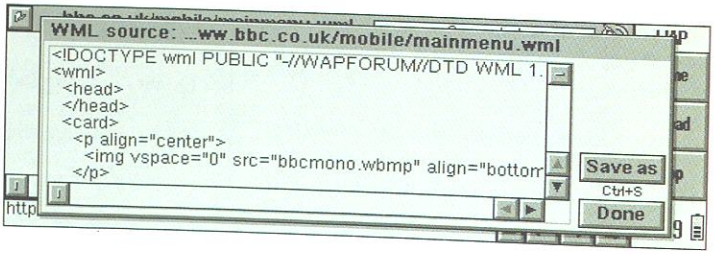
Once account details have been entered, using the browser is remarkably simple, partly because WAP is (by nature) fairly limited in its options. As with Psion's Web application, the address of a site that you want to access is typed into a field on screen, with hyperlinks and buttons then tapped on to navigate the site.

The main customization options involve manipulation of the display. There are three levels of zoom to choose from and the 'View' menu enables you to display or hide the folder list, toolbar, title bar and location. The 'Preferences' menu also lets you choose the font used for the display. You can also set the width of the main window that displays the WAP content. Although you may initially think that you'd want to make use of as much of the screen as possible, given that WAP sites are already optimised for the smaller screens of mobile phones (and similar) they tend to display better when you shrink the window width to between 30 and 40 characters.

A bookmark feature lets you save the addresses of your favourite WAP sites to save retyping, and there's also a 'Recent



Checking the latest news on BBC's WAP site



Revealing the WML secrets of a WAP site

services' feature that stores the addresses of recently visited sites.

Unlike when using a WAP-enabled phone, the Psion WAP browser allows you to view content offline—particularly useful if you want to test a WAP site you're building. The Psion browser also allows you to view the source code of WAP sites, making it even more of a WAP developer's must-have.

Although the WAP browser works extremely well, the current crop of WAP sites is rather limited compared to the content available on the HTML-based World Wide Web. Most people will be better served by either Web or Opera and either turning off the display of images or accepting the somewhat slower delivery of web sites in comparison to WAP sites.

Only time will tell whether WAP-optimised sites will really 'catch on' over the coming months. If they do, then the Psion WAP browser will be a definitive and indispensable tool.

Dave Morgan

Psion WAP browser

From: Psion - *www.psion.com*

Availability: Pre-release available now

Runs on: all current EPOC models

Price: pricing TBA

Quality ★★★★½

Value n/a (TBA)

Setting up a Fonedata account

Here's how to set up a free Fonedata WAP account:

1. Visit *www.fonedata.com* and sign up. You'll then get a username and password.
2. Set up a new Internet service on your Psion. From 'Control panel', select 'Internet', use [Ctrl]+[N] to create a new service and press [Enter] to use the standard settings.
3. On the 'Service' tab, type "Fonedata", with the Fonedata access number "+44 845 0341001" in the 'Dial-up number' field.
4. On the 'Account' tab, uncheck 'Manual login' and enter your username and password.
5. Leave the other tabs as they are and use [Ctrl]+[D] to save the settings.
6. Open the WAP browser, select 'Edit | New | Profile' and type in the following:

   Name: "Fonedata"
   Gateway address: "212.4.198.199"
   Session type: select 'Connectionless'
   Internet service: select 'Fonedata'
   Modem: (select whichever modem you intend to use)
   Home Address: (your choice, although Fonedata ask that you set this to *"http://www.fonedata.com/wap/index.wml"*)
7. Leave 'Bind profile to Internet service' unchecked and hit [Enter] to save the settings.

TrueTerm Thesaurus

Although often criticised for lack of word depth, Psion's built-in Spell application includes (in ER5) a pretty serviceable thesaurus, certainly good enough for the casual writer. And of course it's free, either in the ROM of the Series 5mx or loaded from CD in the case of the Revo.

The appearance of a Thesaurus product from AlphaSoft, who produce the TrueTerm dictionaries (see our review in issue 27), gives hope that it's a comprehensive work with a significantly larger vocabulary than the built-in Psion software. Unfortunately, although there are more word entries, both the average number of synonyms and their quality is significantly lower.

For example, I tried four words at random, "House", "Imagination", "Ambivalent" and "Likely". The total number of suitable synonyms found by the TrueTerm Thesaurus was 43, compared to 83 found by Spell. To further illustrate, TrueTerm's synonyms for "Ambivalent" included the misleading words "unstable", "indecisive" and "wishy-washy", whereas Spell came up with the much higher quality alternative, "equivocal".

The TrueTerm Thesaurus is simply another 'dictionary' that's opened in the standard TrueTerm engine, which is intuitive and easy to use, if a little quirky. As with the other dictionaries, entries can be edited if required.

The saving grace of the TrueTerm Thesaurus is that it's available in no less than eight languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Dutch and Swedish), possibly making it a useful aid for the serious language student.

Native English speakers shouldn't bother though, as there's a generally better application provided free by Psion.

Steve Litchfield

TrueTerm Thesaurus

From: Electronic download only, from AlphaSoft - *www.trueterm.com*

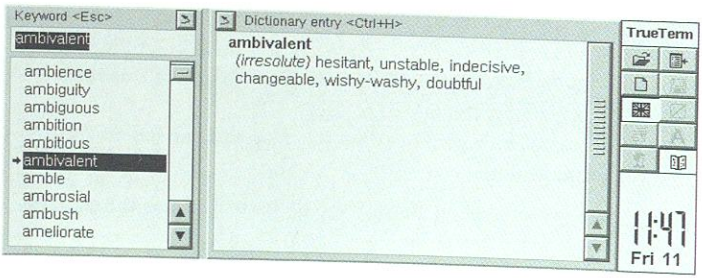
Availability: Now

Runs on: all current EPOC models

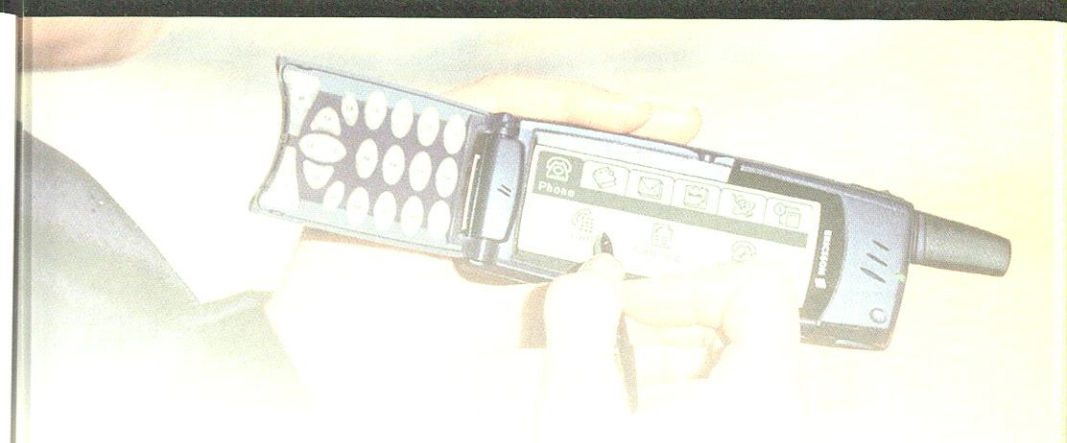
Price: $30

Quality ★★☆☆☆

Value ★★☆☆☆



The TrueTerm Thesaurus 'dictionary' in action



A brief diversion.

Steve Litchfield gets an exclusive preview of a new and unusual EPOC device, the forthcoming Ericsson R380...

In 'The Quartz crystal ball' in the last issue of *Palmtop*, I looked at some of the EPOC software and hardware that will be appearing next year, focussing mainly on the Communicator concept, merging mobile phone, palmtop and numerous other technologies, including Bluetooth and GPS (Global Positioning Systems). The resulting device, while very attractive, is initially going to be similar in size and weight to the Series 5mx of today, albeit with a different aspect ratio and appearance. No doubt both size and weight will decrease in time, with the Quartz devices of 2002 closer to the size of the Psion Revo or Palm organisers of today. No doubt. But that's a long time to wait.

If you'd rather integrate your EPOC palmtop and mobile phone before the year is out, there's another option. Designed in the UK, and developed over the last two years in parallel with the teams working on the Communicator, Ericsson's R380 smartphone offers a lot of the same functionality together with a much earlier launch date (it should be in the shops in volume by this November).

Introducing the R380

Weighing in at just 117g and only 19mm thick, the R380 is staggeringly small considering its functionality. Even adding a typical snap-on Li-Ion 950mAh battery only adds another 40g and 9mm. Looking and feeling at first like just another modern WAP phone, the R380's star turn comes when you realise that the entire phone keypad swings out to reveal a svelte, stylus-based PDA. Electronics in the hinge inform the phone of the change and the familiar phone display automatically switches to a 1/8th VGA (landscape) mode. A backlight comes on initially and, if needed, can be manually reactivated using a button at the top of the unit.

Despite the initial appearance, the R380 runs essentially the same EPOC Release 5 operating system as your Series 5mx. Don't get *too* excited though, as the familiar 'EIKON' interface is nowhere to be seen. It was always stressed by Psion and Symbian when launching the original Series 5 that its interface was just one possibility and that other manufacturers and licensees could add any user interface they liked to the raw EPOC operating system. In fact, rumours still abound of the possibility of a tie-up between Symbian and Palm to produce handhelds with the popular Palm OS interface on top of EPOC, running on modern 32-bit computer hardware.

Applications

Anyone who's used a Series 5 or Revo will recognise features in the R380's application set, despite the new look and feel. The underlying filing system is totally hidden, in Palm organiser fashion, so you only have to worry about which application to use, rather than having to select a file for it as well. Although there is a 'System' screen, it's little more than a shell for the comprehensive 'Preferences' section, in which every aspect of phone and PDA functions can be customised, right down to whether the display is flipped for a right or left handed user.

There's also no support for adding third party applications—the application set is 'locked down' in order to get the smartphone through the maze that is the process of 'type approval' in the telecommunications world. Although this is a pity for hardened EPOC 'power' users, this unit isn't really designed to be a desktop or palmtop replacement, but rather an integrated organiser and cellphone for anybody wanting to reduce the bulk of electronic equipment they carry each day.

Taking the built-in applications in the same icon order as the R380 itself, 'Phone' is a phone dialler and call logger, breaking down your calling history to the level of who each call was made to and how long it lasted. 'Contacts' is essentially the same as in the current Psion range and is fully infrared-compatible with other palmtops and organisers via the vCard standard. And, in similar fashion to the Quartz platform looked at in issue 29, there's good integration with the dialling and email functions, so that tapping on the appropriate icon 'does the right thing'.

'Messaging' is a slightly simplified version of ER5's Email application. 'Calendar' is a heavily-tweaked version of Agenda, mainly due to the screen size constraints. It has views for Month, Week, Day and To-do, although the latter is limited to just the one list.

'WAP services' is the familiar Ericsson Mobile Internet WAP browser, and perhaps the main avenue for extending the R380's functionality, by accessing WAP sites and applications over the Internet (see 'A brief introduction to WAP', also in issue 29).

The appearance of an 'Extras' section isn't quite as exciting as it sounds, but it does open up another row of icons, including 'Notepad' (essentially, ER5's Jotter), 'Clock' (a stripped-down version of the familiar Time), 'Calculator' and 'Game' (a ported version of EMCC Software's Reversi/Othello clone).

Most application screens on the R380 have a toolbar on their right-hand edge, with pick-lists of relevant options and views (there's no 'menu' system in this version of EPOC), and icons for any other appropriate operations (such as 'New entry', 'Find', 'OK', 'Go back', etc.)

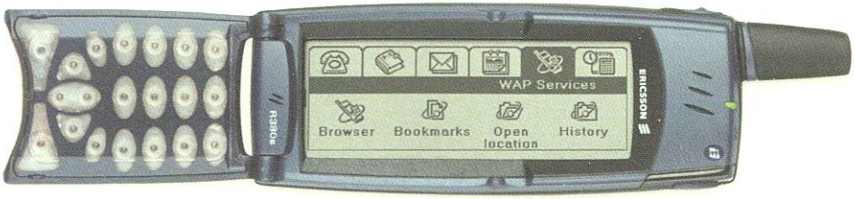
Jottings

From the images on these pages you will have noticed the complete absence of a keyboard, and may be wondering how it's possible to enter text into the R380. Following on from Symbian's agreements with CIC in recent times, the R380 comes with a version of their 'Jot' handwriting recognition system. Although it won't interpret cursive (joined-up) writing, it does a good enough job of handling individual letters, provided that your normal writing style isn't too far from CIC's norm. For those who prefer a QWERTY layout, there's an on-screen pop-up keyboard, although this drastically reduces the amount of usable screen real estate. The stylus itself is a tiny 9cm long plastic 'pick', reminiscent of that on the Revo. It's neatly housed in a slot in the rear of the battery pack.

Although not available for this review, there will be PC synchronisation software and a serial cable, allowing diary, Contacts and email synchronisation to Outlook, Schedule and Lotus Notes, among others.

Finally, following the modern trend, the R380 is going to be available in a variety of colours, starting with 'Classic Blue', 'Desert Green' and 'City Gray'. The telephone part of the unit is derived from Ericsson's popular T28 and is dual-band (GSM 900/1800). The T28's hands-free kit apparently works well with the R380, so having the PDA screen embedded in the phone shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Perhaps the only drawback to such an integrated arrangement is when using the



... > Eurosport Portal > European Sports
[Soccer | Hockey | Auto racing | Skiing | Golf]
[Baseball | Horse Racing | Basketball | Tennis]
R380s
ERICSSON

unit in a location where mobile phones are forbidden, such as on aircraft—there's currently no way to use the PDA software without the phone being 'on'. Battery life is expected to be fairly good, offering around 80 hours of standby or PDA-usage time. When connected to the Internet, or when making voice calls, life on the standard battery should be the usual two to three hours.

Temptation

With the R380, Ericsson are again slightly ahead of the rest of the pack. This may not be the sort of EPOC handheld that we've come to know over the last few years, but many PDA users will be at least tempted by this millennium-year version of Ericsson's vision of integrated communications.

Smartphone coverage in Palmtop?

With the world of EPOC (or Symbian, as many industry people now refer to it) expanding in ever-widening directions, don't be concerned that Palmtop magazine is going to get too distracted by communicators and phones, however 'smart' they turn out to be.

Our policy is to cover any device that runs EPOC in appropriate detail only. For a smartphone, this might be a one-off feature or brief review; for a communicator, perhaps a full review and a follow-up or tutorial. As a general rule, if an EPOC device can't be easily extended using third party software then we won't be giving it regular space in the magazine.

Getting along with RMRZip

Steve Litchfield demonstrates that there's more to RMRZip than meets the eye

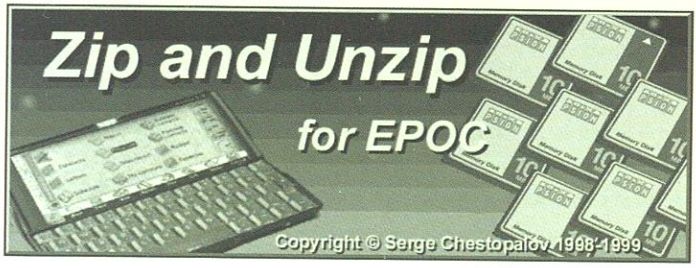
It is easy to dismiss RMRZip as nothing more than a utility to help you unpack ZIP files downloaded from the Internet. It can do that, of course, and is completely compatible with ZIP archives created in the wider desktop computer world. But there are also many useful features which are rarely acknowledged, plus a number of uses which are only revealed after a little lateral thinking.

Why ZIP?

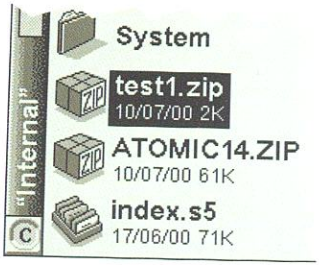
The ZIP format was invented by PKWare to help distribute PC DOS programs on bulletin boards in the early 1980s. Rather than have to send out dozens of individual files, programmers were able to compress the lot into a single quick-to-download archive (file), with users decompressing it on their own hard disk to discover the original files.

Early ZIP variants included PKARC and PKZIP 1.1, each of which formed a standard for a long time, but the advent of PKZIP 2.04g in 1992 perfected the technology to such a degree that the format hasn't changed at all in over eight years. The complex command line interface was made obsolete years ago, of course, with WinZIP able to do the same thing from a friendly Windows interface.

If you're already familiar with WinZIP on the desktop then RMRZip on the Series 5mx (or



The definitive ZIP utility for EPOC



Clearly identifying RMRZip archives on the System screen

indeed any EPOC palmtop) will feel like an old friend, as the interface is virtually identical. Incidentally, should you come across them, early versions for the Series 3 and Series 5 'Classic' were named 'PsiZip' and 'S5Zip' respectively, though both have now been brought into the standard 'RMR' line.

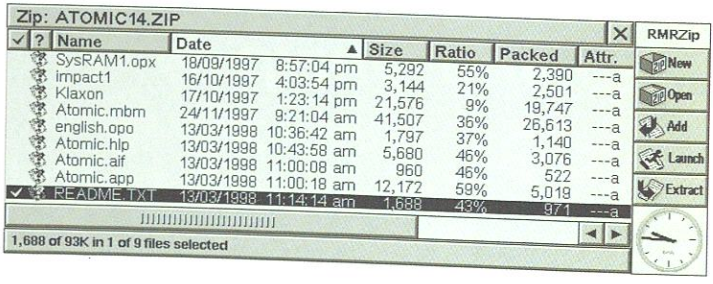
Unpacking ZIP archives

The first time you see the word 'ZIP' mentioned is likely to be as a file extension on a program downloaded from the Internet. Most of the time you'll do the downloading and unzipping on your desktop computer, but it's almost as easy to do the same directly on an EPOC palmtop. On ER5 computers (Revo, 5mx, etc.), ZIP files even show up on the System screen with a special RMRZip icon and can be tapped on in the usual way. On the Series 5 'Classic', the tapping still works but you'll have to endure a '?' icon instead.

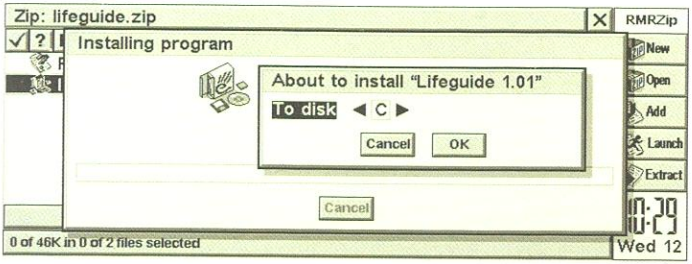
Once launched with a specific ZIP file, RMRZip shows the archive's contents, sorted by name, date, size, and so on. As with other professionally written EPOC applications, tapping on each column's header defines it as the sort criteria and toggles between sorting in ascending or descending order. If you've turned on viewing of file icons in 'View preferences | Misc', the appropriate icon will be displayed for each item, helping you to spot which files are of which type. However, most people find that turning this feature on slows RMRZip down too much—unless you really *need* the individual icons, they're best left turned off.

If the ZIP archive contains a program, the first thing you'd normally do is highlight and tap on any 'README.TXT' file or similar. Double-tapping a file tells RMRZip to 'Launch' the file, opening it up in whichever application would normally be used from the System screen (usually Word or Web). If there are one or more SIS (EPOC installation) files, these can also be launched in the same way, installing the program's components without any need to manually 'Extract' each file first.

If you need access to other, less obvious files in the ZIP archive, it's usually enough to extract them into an empty folder (if you're not sure where to put them) or to a specific



An open ZIP archive, sorted by date, with file icons turned off



Installing from a SIS file inside a ZIP archive

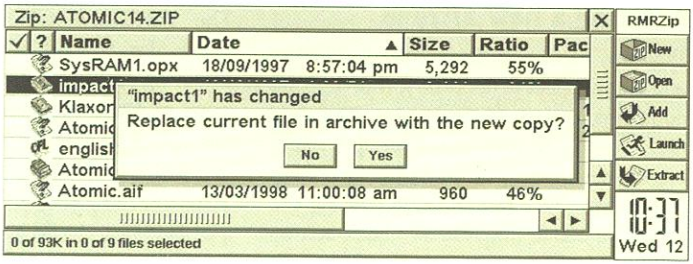
destination folder (if you've read the instructions and are confident about where they should go). A 'Restore folders' check box in the 'Extract' dialog lets you choose to reproduce any path information stored in the original archive—in other words, to create the same pattern of files and nested folders.

All the usual EPOC conventions are followed, including being able to use [Shift] and tap to highlight sequences of files and then extract them all in one go. The zoom command icons are especially useful, increasing the amount of file information that can be shown on each line and on the screen as a whole, at the expense of readability.

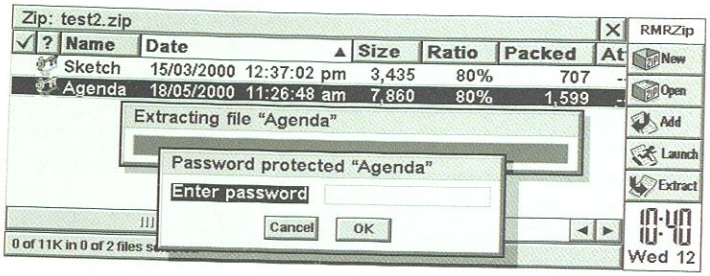
Why you might 'roll your own'

The toolbar's 'Add' button gives a clue as to the other core feature of RMRZip, that of creating your own ZIP archives. It would be a mistake to think this only applies to programmers trying to distribute their creations—there are many uses for this technology that apply to the rest of us:

- Compressing large files that are seldom used or worked on. For example, mainly-textual databases often compress to about a third their original size. Note that because RMRZip supports the launching of document files directly from within a ZIP archive, automatically replacing the original after you've finished altering it, there's no requirement to extract a file manually, open it from the System screen and then add it back afterwards.
- Compressing a large EPOC document file prior to attaching it to an email. When sending over a slow GSM mobile phone link, the difference between taking five minutes to send and squeezing it down to two can represent a useful saving.
- Backing up and archiving important sections of an EPOC disk, e.g. your '\Documents' folder into 'july2000.zip',



Dialog box showing automatic detection of changes to a launched file



RMRZip in control of sensitive documents

'august2000.zip', and so on. Even on the speedy 5mx and Revo, RMRZip can take a minute or so to compress a typical folder, so you wouldn't generally want to set it to back up an entire disk in this way.

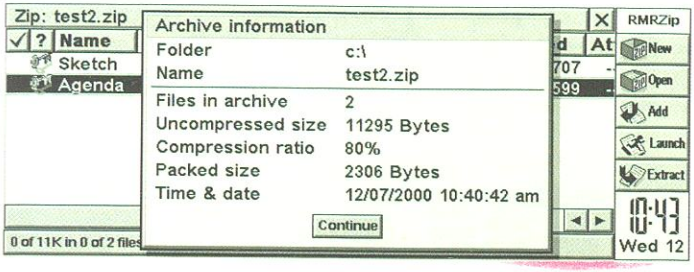
- Grouping related files into a single archive to make sure they stay together when passed on, usually as an attachment to an email. Even if you're not a programmer, there are many occasions when you'll want to bundle Word, Sheet and Data files together for a particular topic or project. Because the ZIP format allows for the storing of folders and file paths, it's even easy to package an entire directory tree into a single file. The compression and reduction in overall file size comes as a bonus.
- Encrypting and password-protecting a sensitive file. Although RMRZip is almost certainly overkill for this one task, it's a handy additional feature to have. Again, the compression is a bonus.

Creating a new archive

Typically, you'd use 'Create new archive...' and then add files as necessary, with RMRZip compressing each file as you go. The 'Add file...' dialog is very powerful and worth exploring in detail. Although there's no way just to specify a folder name, leaving the 'Files' line blank, the 'Add all' check-box on the 'Files' tab achieves the same effect. The 'Archive type' field is probably best left as 'Standard Zip' unless you're planning to send the ZIP archive to a Series 5 'Classic' user, for whom the extra header information of 'Zip with icon' will prove helpful in identifying what the file contains. Don't worry though, other computer users will be able to open the archive whichever header format you choose, such is the robustness of the ZIP file format.

You can control how far RMRZip 'drills down' into your folder structure in the 'Options' tab. 'Recurse' scans every file in every folder that's contained 'beneath' the current one, with 'Save folder info' letting you specify whether original or relative path information should be stored (e.g. '\Documents\JulyWork\ProjectX\Word' or 'ProjectX\Word' rather than just 'Word'). Despite the helpful comments beside each field, it's easy to get confused here, and a moment or two to ponder what you actually want to store is recommended.

The 'Advanced' tab is also noteworthy. 'Move files' is a big help when tidying and archiving your disk, as it deletes the original copy of each file after it's been added to the ZIP. 'Add password' allows you to password protect (and to encrypt) individual (or groups of) files within the archive, although you should note that utilities exist on the



Archive information for a small ZIP file

Internet to break ZIP encryption and that this should merely be considered as a way to stop casual access. Finally, 'Compression' offers a number of alternative algorithms, each playing off speed of compression against the size of the final archive. In my experience, it's usually best to leave this set to 'Normal', as the savings in either direction tend to be minimal.

When filenames aren't enough

While adding a file or group of files, or at any point thereafter, RMRZip lets you add and then edit text comments for each file, or indeed for the whole archive. Although EPOC allows very long filenames, it's sometimes more convenient to keep them fairly brief and to put more detailed information into a comment elsewhere. In particular, the comment for the whole ZIP archive can contain line breaks and far more text. Mind you, there's no indication on the RMRZip screen that a comment has been added in this way, and anyone opening up the archive from scratch would need to know where to look.

Not always making sense

Useful though ZIP compression is, its primary method of stripping out redundant patterns of bytes in the original file does occasionally come unstuck. Although it's still useful as a means of grouping files and folders together, trying to zip up GIF or JPG images, TomeRaider documents or EPOC sound files will generally achieve little. These file types are already fairly heavily compressed, and trying to ZIP them may even produce archives *larger* than the originals.

If you're interested, there's a summary of RMRZip's statistics for the current archive on the 'Edit' menu. Usually of most interest will be the ratio of uncompressed to packed file size.

A utility for all seasons

Just as on the desktop, daily work with a Psion (or compatible) tends to involve a lot of file manipulation, either for your own use or for onward transmission to others. RMRZip can be an invaluable tool, able to turn its hand to a variety of useful tasks. Purple Software's commercial Navigator also has built-in ZIP file support, but RMRZip is fully working shareware, more focussed and worthy of a place on any EPOC palmtop.

RMRZip is available from RMR Software, www.rmrsoft.com, and costs £15 to register.

Printing on the MOVE

Dave Morgan examines current options for portable printing

The main reason for using your Psion palmtop instead of a desktop computer has to be its portability. Although you can connect many printer types to your Psion, connecting it to a conventional printer means that you're effectively still tied to the office. If you want *true* portability, you need to consider a mobile printer.

Three years on

Back in March 1997 when we reviewed portable printers in issue 11 of *Palmtop*, there were six models to choose from. One of the six models reviewed was a thermal printer and another used dot matrix technology. The output from either of these two would be unacceptable for correspondence by today's more rigorous standards.

Cartridges are still widely available for the inkjet printers we covered then, and the **Canon BJ30**, **Canon BJC70** and **HP Deskjet 340** are still supported with EPOC print drivers, so if you can find one of these older models, most likely second hand, they may be a good buy.

The current market is restricted to a choice of only four units. Canon has the widest range of mobile printers, with two models: the **BJC50** and **BJC85**. Competition comes in the form of Hewlett Packard's **Deskjet 350CBi** and Brother's **MP21C**.

The last of these is powered through a PC Card interface. Although you can buy a PC Card adaptor for your Psion, it is *not* capable of powering the printer, unfortunately ruling out the Brother.

Given the small number of compatible printers (two of which come from the same manufacturer), you might think that choosing between them would be a simple task. However, all three printers work extremely well with Psion and EPOC computers, so the task is not as straightforward as it seems.

Canon BJC50

At £225 in the UK, the Canon BJC50 is the most expensive of the three printers, but it is also the smallest. Its footprint is just half the size of an A4 page (the actual dimensions are 302mm wide, 113mm deep and 49mm high) and it weighs in at only 900 grammes. Canon claims that the BJC50 is "Officially the world's smallest Bubblejet printer".

The printer is supplied with a multi-voltage power adaptor so it can still be used if you travel abroad. Amazingly, given its size, it also has a built-in lithium-ion battery with a life of 100 A4 pages. And being lithium-ion, the battery doesn't have to be fully discharged before it can be recharged.

Even more impressively, there is an optional scanner 'cartridge' that can be used in place of the ink cartridge. This converts the printer into a portable colour scanner, though this is only of use if you intend to use it with a desktop PC.

The stated maximum print speed is 5.5 pages per minute, although in practice this can come down to little more than a page per minute when printing real-life documents. This is not usually a problem though, as you are unlikely to be using a portable printer to print mailshots or hundred page reports.

If you *do* want to use the BJC50 for large print runs, you'll need to invest in the optional auto-sheet feeder. The standard unit can only take one sheet of paper at a time, but the feeder expands this to 30.

At 720x360 dots per inch the print quality is more than acceptable, although it is obvious that the output was produced on a bubblejet rather than a laser printer.

Canon BJC85

The Canon BJC85 is deeper than the BJC50, at 300mm wide, 158mm deep and 57mm high. At 1.4kg it's also substantially heavier. The BJC85 is still a portable machine, though if you decide to carry it around in your briefcase you won't have much room left for anything else.

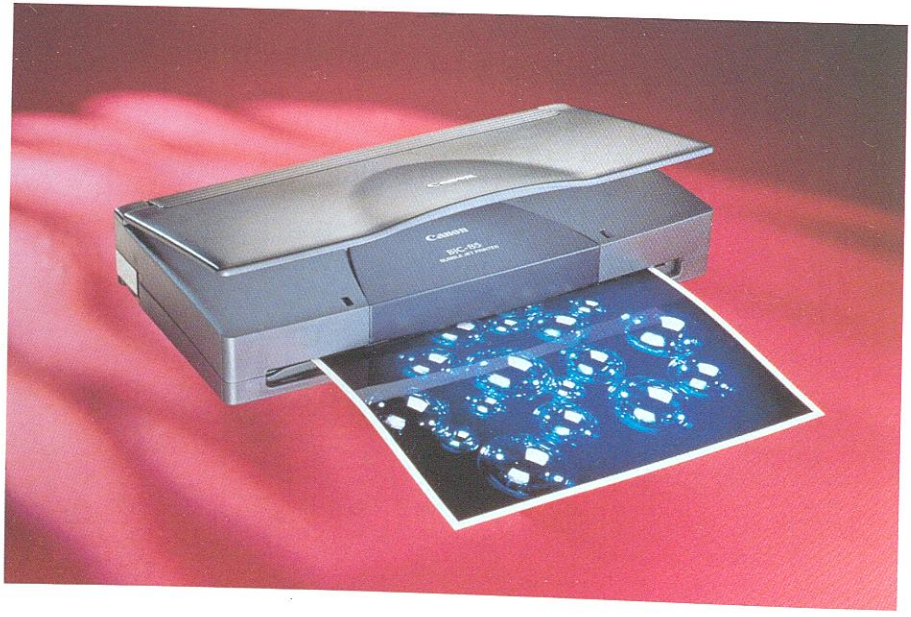
Again, the printer is supplied with a multi-voltage power adaptor that allows you to use it anywhere in the world, provided you can find somewhere to plug it in. If you need to use it away from mains power points, you'd also need to buy the optional battery pack, which has a rated life of 200 pages.

The BJC85 can use the same optional scanner cartridge as the BJC50, again turning it into a portable colour scanner for use with a PC.

The stated maximum print speed is slightly slower than the BJC50, at five pages per minute, although again this reduces considerably in practice. The BJC85 has a built-in auto-sheet feeder which can take 30 sheets at a time. Although it's slightly slower than the BJC50 when printing individual pages, it completes multiple-page print runs faster because you don't have to waste time loading each sheet individually.

The print quality is the same as the BJC50, and as with all the printers covered here it supports printing of all the foreign, accented and currency symbols normally accessible from your Psion.

With both Canon units, you *must* use the new third-party Canon BJC80 driver, available for free download from *www.aps.anl.gov/~anj/bjc80* . The standard 'Canon Bubblejet (LQ mode)' driver built into current EPOC devices refuses to print € and £ symbols,



and the 'Canon Bubblejet (BJ mode)' driver does not work at all. Be sure to use the 'Mono' driver unless you're printing from a Series 7 or netBook, in which case the 'Colour' version of the driver will give you colour printing capability, should you need it.

Hewlett Packard Deskjet 350CBi

Hewlett Packard's Deskjet 350CBi replaces their Deskjet 340 and is virtually identical, except that the 350CBi can communicate via infrared (as can both of the other printers on test). Unlike the Canon printers, the infrared port is not built-in, instead coming as a clip-on pod that attaches to the serial port, similar to Ericsson's DI27 and DI28 clip-on infrared modem pods for their mobile phones.

This is the largest and heaviest printer of the three, at 310mm wide, 150mm high, 66mm deep and weighing 1.9kg. Although a portable sheet feeder is included with the printer, this clips onto the back of the unit (unlike the Canon BJC85 which has it built into the lid), increasing the depth to 94mm and the weight to 2.5kg.

At twice the weight of the Canon BJC85 and nearly three times that of the BJC50, this is not a printer you will want to carry around on a regular basis. However,

Hewlett Packard claim that it has been drop tested with no ill effects. The build quality certainly feels superior to the Canon units, possibly justifying the additional weight.

As with both Canon printers, the Hewlett Packard model is supplied with a multi-voltage power adaptor. It also comes with a rechargeable NiMH battery pack which does not need to be fully discharged before recharging.

Again, the rather optimistic stated maximum print speed of five pages per minute should be disregarded for practical purposes, although output appears slightly faster than with the Canon models.

Where the Hewlett Packard unit really scores is its print quality. Using Psion's built-in HP Deskjet 340 driver, the 600x600 dots per inch print resolution produces stunning output, comparable to that from most laser printers.

Mobile printing

All three printers work beautifully with EPOC computers. They all connect to Psions successfully via infrared, complex elements such as embedded objects in Word present no problems and print quality is generally high. Although you can of course connect via a standard parallel printer cable, this offers no real benefits over infrared printing and is an unnecessary extra to carry around.

When it comes to ease of use, there is little between the units. You simply switch the printer on, slide in one or more sheets of paper, point the Psion towards the printer's infrared window and select the 'Print' option.

All the printers are supplied with suitable cables for PC use.

If you're using a Series 5 'Classic' it's worth visiting Psion's web site (*www.psion.com*) to get the updated driver for the HP unit. This increases the print speed and also improves printing when using certain formatting (such as bold type). The driver update is free and is supplied as a 35K SIS file. As mentioned earlier, Canon users must get the latest driver from *www.aps.anl.gov/~anj/bjc80* .

Styling is of course a matter of personal taste, but I felt that the dark grey case and metallic front panel made the Deskjet 350CBi more visually pleasing than the cheaper-looking black plastic of the Canon printers. Although the Hewlett Packard costs less that the Canon ones, it oozes quality and gives the impression of being more expensive. This might be important if you're working in an image conscious environment, such as if you're printing on a client's premises.

Aside from pure aesthetics, the Canon printers (especially the BJC85) gave the impression that they would not withstand as much prolonged abuse as the Hewlett Packard unit. The latter really does look like it would survive being run over by a bus, whereas the Canons look a little flimsy by comparison. The downside is that the Hewlett Packard's desktop printer qualities come with desktop printer dimensions—it's the bulkiest printer by a wide margin, almost to the point of not qualifying as a portable.

A good compromise would be Canon's BJC85. It's much lighter than the Hewlett Packard model and the built-in auto-sheet feeder makes printing much easier. The downside to the BJC85 is the fact that the battery pack is an optional extra, which will

either be a serious inconvenience or an additional expense if you do a lot of field work.

Making a choice

For true portability, my personal choice has to be the Canon BJC50. Although it can only take one sheet of paper at a time, it's small enough to fit in a briefcase, produces acceptable quality output and runs from a battery with enough life to satisfy even the most enthusiastic mobile executive. It's not as robust as the Hewlett Packard, but still gives the impression that it would survive bouncing around in the back of a car without suffering too badly.

Older printers

If you already have an older model of portable printer not mentioned in this article, or have the opportunity to buy one cheaply, you may be able to get it working with satisfactory results—but it's just as likely that you may not, so use caution when buying. If at all possible, try out the unit you intend to buy before parting with your money. Make sure you can print samples of all the document types you're likely to be working on, and that they all print out in the right typeface, orientation, etc.

If you're using a printer that's not completely compatible then be prepared to get unpredictable results. You may find that pages print out perfectly in one font but not in another, or that printing in landscape mode produces dozens of blank pages of output. If you want the best results, try to use one of the printers we've tested here.

You will find some useful tips on configuring printer settings in our 'Starting up: Printing' article in issue 23.

If you already own an older printer then you've got nothing to lose by trying it out, so set up your Psion to use the driver for the nearest similar printer model by the same manufacturer. If you're unsure then you may like to try them all, as you can't do any harm by selecting the wrong one. If nothing else works, try the 'General' printer driver. Also, check the documentation that came with the printer, as it may be possible to reconfigure it to 'emulate' a different printer model, using that driver instead.

On the desktop

If you don't need true portability, save yourself some money and buy a (cheaper) desktop printer instead. Alternatively, you may be able to print to an existing desktop printer via PsiWin. In the next issue, we'll be looking at desktop printing options, including both inkjet and laser printers.

Availability

Street prices for the printers reviewed here will vary, but expect to pay around £270 for the BJC50, £220 for the BJC85 and £200 for the HP350 (all including VAT).

Canon printers - *www.canon.com*

Hewlett Packard printers - *www.hp.com*

Keeping track

Steve Litchfield looks at ways of managing your book, CD or video collection

If there's one thing a Psion palmtop is a perfect match for, it's the entry of information on the move. Even simply around your house or place of work. The freedom to enter text whether you're sitting on the carpet, reclining in the garden or while on the toilet(!) means that logging new information can be done instantly rather than scribbling notes to yourself on scraps of paper or (usually foolishly) making 'mental notes'.

Aside from names and addresses, most of us have used Data at some point to compile lists of collectables, whether our CDs, video-cassettes, DVDs or even (shockingly, low-tech, I know) books or stamps. Around two years ago (in issue 18's 'Hi-Tech Hi-Fi Heaven' feature), we looked in detail at ways of using Data to track a CD collection, adding such embellishments as cover images and sound clips. Although many of the tips passed on in that article are relevant to tracking other collectables (and indeed are summarised below), the challenge of (for example) maintaining a log of video recordings which still have space left on the tapes needs a little extra creativity.

Whichever technique you decide to use, the aim is to know at any point in time what items you possess, where they are and their salient attributes: contents, dates, format, value, etc.

Sheet to the rescue

A common mistake when starting to log a collection is to launch oneself into the Data application, add all the labels that immediately come to mind, including, as an extreme example, "Composer's favourite colour", "Track 1 length" and "Complete

Arial | 10 pt | B I U | video blan

G2 =B2-D2-F2

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Tape	Length (mins)	Prog1	Time1	Prog2	Time2	Remaining
2	a	240	Some mothers	29	TOTP	30	181
3	b	180	Eastenders	101			79
4	c	180	Terminator 2	139			41
5	d	180	Teletubbies	46	Tweenies	29	105
6	e	240					240
7	f	180	Jurassic Park	105	Documentary	39	36
8							

Keeping track of a set of videotapes

cast list". It's usually far more useful to sit back and think about what you want to achieve and what data is really necessary.

For example, a database of taped videocassettes, re-recorded weekly with new programs of assorted duration and shelf life, is probably best suited to being kept in Sheet. With one row per tape, you can then store program information in subsequent columns, using Sheet to perform the calculation of remaining time (see the screen shot above). To take things further and to save on blank tapes, it would be possible to input a new program length in minutes and then get Sheet to display the tape with the smallest remaining time that still leaves room for your program. See our series 'Advanced spreadsheet techniques', which ran from issues 21 to 26, for discussion of the logic needed to accomplish this.

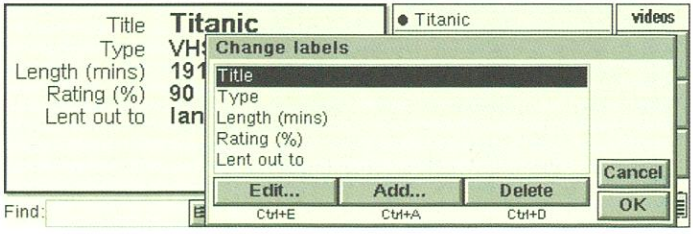
You might also want to use Sheet if your collection involves statistics of any kind, perhaps personal ratings or official sales information, from which you later want to produce averages. Or perhaps you're interested in the total value of items in the collection. Either way, a SUM formula and some simple arithmetic in Sheet will perform the job very well.

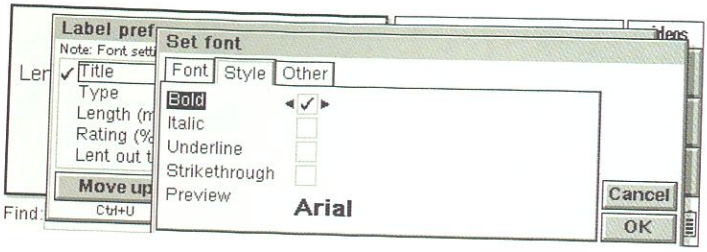
Note that Sheet on all ER5 palmtops has the ability to sort, so as long as you can live with a tabular layout it may be a better tool than Data for handling collection information.

Workhorse Data

Data is, of course, the workhorse of many palmtops, and the customisable label layout (use the menu command 'Change labels') makes it a very good tool for cataloguing information that can be entered into a standard format. If you're not already confident at finding your way around Data's dialogs and preferences, try reading through our series 'Working with Data', which ran from issues 19 to 21.

Creating the bare bones of a video and DVD collection on a Revo





Making sure that important fields are shown prominently

As hinted (humorously) above, try to resist using labels for *every* attribute you can think of. The more fields there are to fill in when cataloguing your collection the more bored you'll get and the less likely you are to finish the task. You can always have one or more 'Notes' fields, into which detailed and esoteric information can be entered as and when needed, though do try to avoid using fields of type 'Memo'. Although these may seem like a great idea, their presence often means that you'll have problems exporting your collection database to any other system in the future, perhaps to manipulate on the desktop for better formatted printing, or perhaps to share your collection with a non-Psion owning friend.

Where number fields are created (e.g. for tape lengths in minutes or page counts), it's worth tapping on 'Options...' to set up a sensible number range. Although this is unlikely to save you much time when entering data, it will help keep you focussed on the sort of numbers involved and you're less likely to get confused between percentages, minutes and dates.

Data's 'Sort by label' command will of course make sure your collection is presented in some kind of order (usually alphabetically by title) and the 'Font...' button in 'Label preferences' is a good way of tweaking the fonts used so that important information such as titles and authors catch the eye.

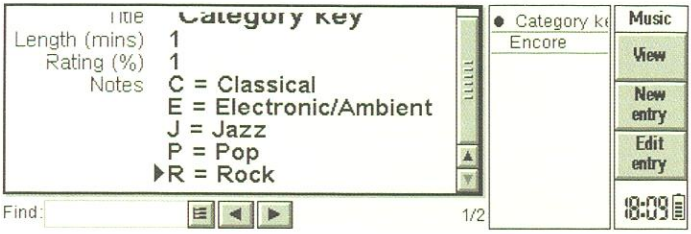
Most of us will want items from our collection seen by others and used as a resource, in which case it's useful to include a label such as 'Lent to:' so that borrowed items can be chased up and eventually returned to their rightful place.

As mentioned in 'Hi-Tech Hi-Fi Heaven', the amount of work needed to insert artwork and sound clips into database entries should not be underestimated. It's best to make these optional, especially in view of the fact that they won't make it outside your Psion database should you want to export the basic information.

Categories

By the time you've typed in 'Historical drama' or 'Piano concerto' four or five times, you'll be wishing for a way of easily categorising your collection entries. As Data doesn't have a built-in category system, the easiest way to tackle the problem is with letter codes that only take a second or so to type in.

Set up a label for 'Category', set it to type 'Text', of length '1' character, and then devise your own code. For example, in a music collection you might use "J" for "Jazz", "R" for "Rock", "C" for "Classical" and so on. Make up a 'dummy' entry that



Setting up suitable category codes for collection entries

appears at the start of the sorted database (usually by giving it a title starting with a space, or similar) and then list the category codes in this entry, as shown in the screen shot at the top of the next page.

Data can, of course, sort on any label you specify, so having a category field gives you the capability to produce reports that show collection items pre-sorted according to category or type (e.g. all the Classical albums, then all the Jazz, etc. Or all the videos, then all the DVDs, and so on).

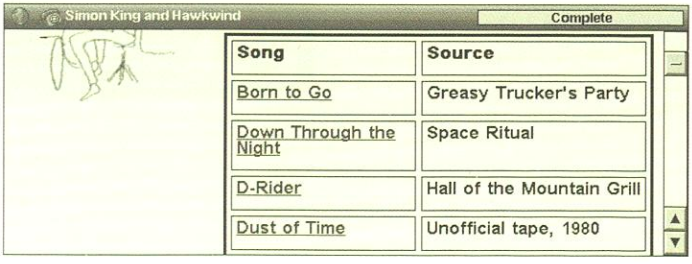
Flexible Web

This is a slightly unusual way to collate information about your collection, and one that depends on you knowing (or learning) the fundamentals of HTML, the language behind the World Wide Web. By keeping your data in a table in an HTML document, you can publish it to your web space and effectively share it with others across the world. This method would be especially suitable for specialist interests (say, a particular author, musician or composer), as others with the same enthusiasm can see your collection at a glance, for comparison with their own.

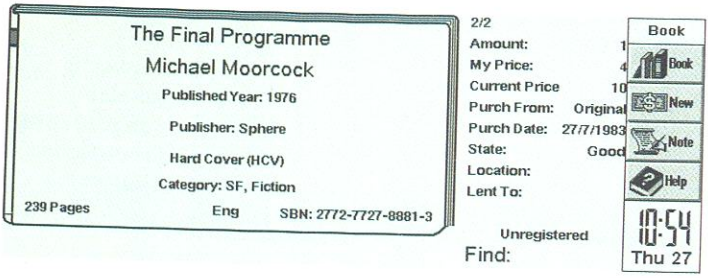
HTML Designer is probably the most efficient way to construct such a table, see 'Become an EPOC webmaster' in issue 29 for more details.

Dedicated software

If the thought of customising Data or Sheet, let alone working in HTML, terrifies you to your core, then you'll probably want to track down third party software to lend a hand. Unfortunately, the only option at present is PocketIQ's range of 'collection' applications. Versions are downloadable (from *www.pocketiq.com*) for Art, Stamps, Videos, Home (inventories), Music, Wine and Books, and I tried out the latest version 2.7.2 of each. Each has the advantage of screens, menu options and functions



Part of a collection of rare songs, on the web



Book Collection in action, from PocketIQ

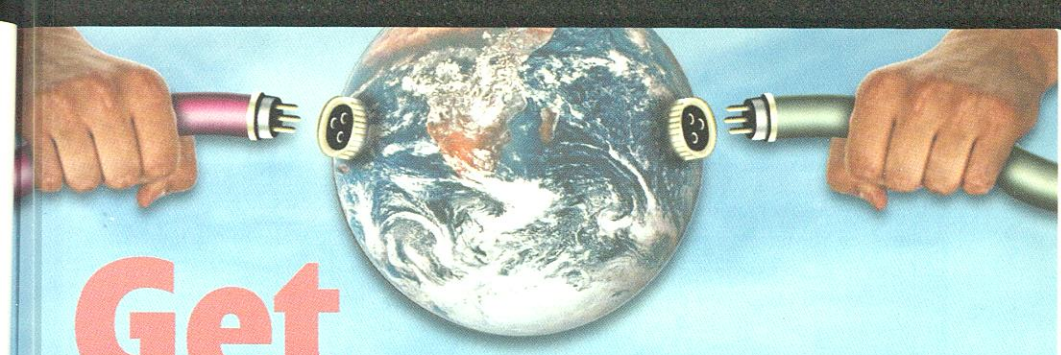
already tailored to your particular interest. If you know any SQL (a database language), the PocketIQ solutions are definitely worth checking out due to their implementation of an SQL advanced search function. So for example, in a large video database, you could search for all the videos starring Bruce Willis that are *not* directed by Ridley Scott *and* are released after 1995. Summary information screens display a number of sums, counts and average values for any desired subset of the collection, and you can also export the subset directly to HTML-format (as mentioned above).

Be warned though, that the developers have mostly chosen to ignore Psion's style guide and that wading through the maze of dialogs can be more than a little frustrating. I applaud the vision of supporting a wide range of specific interests, but the current versions are rather slow, confusing and awkward.

Keeping it up

Once entered, it's vitally important to maintain the collection data 'in real time'. Once you start putting maintenance off, thinking "I'll add (or change) that tomorrow", you'll never have 100% confidence in the data set again.

And don't feel guilty or 'sad' about collecting and then committing the details to electronic storage on your palmtop—you're simply being organised. Also, a well-kept inventory may come in useful in the event of catastrophic loss and any resulting insurance claim.



Get connected!

Pete Sipple begins our new, definitive beginner's guide to getting online with a Psion computer or compatible...

If you haven't already done it, connecting to the Internet with your palmtop probably seems like a daunting task. Since we last looked at getting online two years ago, things have moved on and life is now a lot easier for the beginner.

Although it can all seem a little scary at first, getting connected can be very rewarding. With an Internet connection set up on your palmtop, you'll be able to:

- Collect your email on the move.
- Browse the web for snippets of information wherever you are.
- Send email messages and files to friends or colleagues.
- Interact online with other people who've got similar interests, and collect news and information.
- Upload images to your web site from your digital camera.

If you've already got access to the Internet, either at home or at work, you'll probably be itching to find out how to get your palmtop hooked up and online, but for those new to the online world let's take a moment to explain what the Internet is and how it works.

A brief history lesson

The Internet started life as a robust network of computers set up by the US military as a method of communicating and exchanging data in the event of a nationwide catastrophe. As time went on, educational establishments and research organisations linked into the network. Having grown considerably, it was then opened up to other organisations (and finally the public) in the 1980s. At first the network, although large, was fairly unimpressive: chunks of text with its own series of codes and commands to push small bits of data between large host computers. Now the 'net has evolved much

further, and getting online is now cheaper (often free), easier, and is a much better experience all round. Instead of plain text, you can now access huge databases, encyclopaedias and telephone directories, view images and video, listen to radio stations, use an Internet phone to talk to other users anywhere in the world at almost no cost, play online games and check on your bank account.

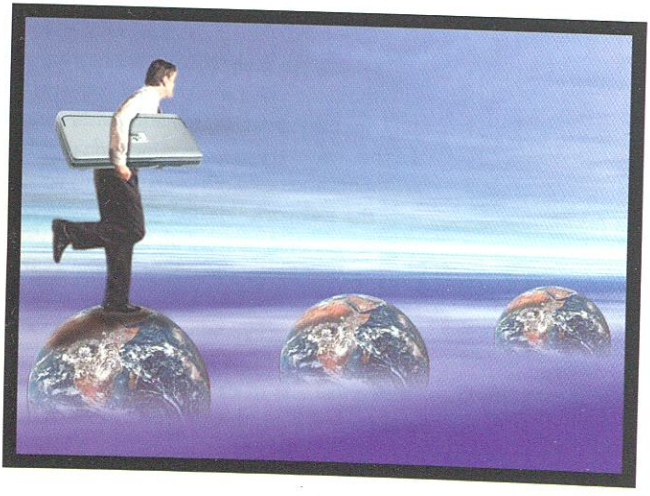
Sound too good to be true? Whenever the media talk about the Internet, there are always horror stories: it's expensive, riddled with pornography, used by hackers and tracked by the Government. While there's an element of truth to all of these comments, in general it's a safe and fun place to be, as long as you use it sensibly.

So, who controls the Internet? Well, technically no one and everyone. There isn't one company in charge of looking after the Internet, although there are lots of big companies involved—especially the Internet Service Providers (ISPs). They own the large computers that make the physical connection onto the Internet and provide access to the public using normal telephone lines. Others with a big stake in the Internet are the telephone companies (e.g. BT), those who make the equipment that forms the framework of the network (e.g. Cisco), and those who supply the browser software used to access the Internet (e.g. Microsoft, Netscape and Opera).

You can add pages of text, sound, pictures and programs to your personal web site. Renting space online is often free, you can update your material whenever you want and it can be accessed from almost anywhere in the world in seconds. There are certain rules, such as infringement of copyright, and governments have the power to take action if illegal activities occur online, just as with other publishing media.

How does it work?

The Internet is an International network of computer servers connected to each other by high-speed data lines. You dial in from your computer to an ISP's server and, by using an Internet address, contact any other server on the network. Servers are simply computers with a unique address, known as an IP address. As an example, the server that Palmtop magazine use for email and web has an IP address of 194.74.254.2. As you can see, it's not very catchy, so IP addresses usually have an 'alias' set to a more



A 'web' (World Wide Web) page, as viewed on a Psion Series 7

friendly textual address, in our case 'palmtop.co.uk'. This is also known as a *domain*, and is made up of a name that your ISP helps you register (e.g. 'palmtop') and some code abbreviations (e.g. '.co.uk') which indicate where the domain is based and what type it is. Other worldwide location codes for domains include:

au	Australia
de	Germany
fr	France
jp	Japan
nl	Netherlands
no	Norway
se	Sweden

Codes for *types* of domain include: 'ac' or 'edu' for academic (often a University); 'com' or 'co' for companies; 'gov' for government bodies; 'mil' for military establishments; 'net' for part of the network, such as an Internet host; and 'org' for a non-profit organisation.

Let's look in more detail at the two parts of the Internet that you will most commonly be working with:

The World Wide Web (WWW)

The Web (and by the way, no-one calls it the "Information Superhighway" any more) is the publishing side of the Internet. Companies and individuals publish content to storage space rented from ISPs in the form of web pages. You can then access this content using a *web browser* program that downloads the pages from the relevant ISP server

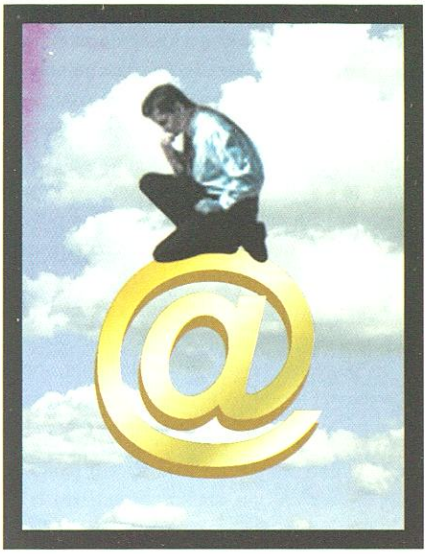
and displays them on your computer screen. Pages usually contain links to other pages and 'surfing' these links to other sites and pages is how we navigate. Finding things online can be tricky until you know how, but we'll cover this later in the series. The letters 'www' in front of our own domain name indicate that 'www.palmtop.co.uk' is our *web* address, though you should note that this is only a guide—many web sites start with other letters or numbers (e.g. '3lib.ukonline.co.uk'), with no 'www' at the beginning. Computers put the not-so-catchy text 'http://' at the beginning of each web address to tell the network exactly what they want, making up the full address. This, if we're being formal, is known as a URL (Uniform Resource Locator), in our case 'http://www.palmtop.co.uk/'. You almost never need to type in or worry about the 'http://' bit or the trailing '/' that often appears at the end though, and it's common practice to omit them when quoting URLs in books or magazines.

Email

Sending messages and files by email is so common these days that many people look surprised if you *don't* have an email address. From a personal point of view, most of my friends and colleagues 'talk' to me via email these days, as it's so quick and easy. I can write messages when I'm in the mood, pass on snippets of news and generally keep in touch with old friends without having to worry about calling at an inappropriate moment. For me, emailing from a Psion has become so useful that I'd never consider switching to a handheld device that couldn't do the same.

Email addresses always have an '@' symbol (pronounced "at") in them, which again tells the Internet how to handle the information. An email address is written as

Using a Psion for email. Once you've done it, you won't want to be without it..



'name@domain.com' (without the quotes, e.g. 'info@palmtop.co.uk'). For some of the rules of sending email, see our 'Netiquette' section on page 63 of issue 29.

It's important to note that you would normally compose new messages and read those you've received while 'offline'. As the term suggests, the time consuming tasks of thinking about what to say and then typing it in are done while *not* connected to a phone line and thus don't incur any associated telephone costs.

Also online

You may also encounter other useful parts of the Internet:

FTP - standing for File Transfer Protocol. This lets you upload and download files to dedicated file servers on the Internet. FTP software is used to publish web page content (see our article entitled 'Become an EPOC webmaster' in issue 29).

UseNet - a huge collection of online newsgroups with people discussing almost every topic you can think of, plus lots of *very* obscure ones too.

IRC - standing for Internet Relay Chat. This lets you join 'virtual' chat rooms, making new friends online.

How do I connect?

You'll need four things in order to get online, which we'll tackle in sequence:

1. A computer.
2. A modem (with any necessary cables).
3. A telephone line (landline or mobile).
4. An account with an ISP.

Computer

We covered connections with both a Series 3 and a Series 5 'Classic' in the tutorial that ran from issue 17 to issue 20. For the current series, we'll concentrate solely on modern EPOC palmtops such as the Series 5mx, Revo, Series 7, netBook and Ericsson MC218. All of these come with the basic software to dial up and make a connection to the big wide world, and we'll look at this in detail in the next issue. If you're trying to connect with a Series 3 or Series 5 'Classic' model then we strongly recommend that you read this article in conjunction with the series in issues 17-20.

Modem

A modem is a little box that sits between your computer and a telephone line to make it possible to connect and talk to other computers. It's able to convert the analogue 'warbling' tones that you hear over the phone line into the digital signals that

computers can understand, and vice versa. Modem stands for **Mo**dulator-**dem**odulator (which you're not expected to remember). Modems come in various shapes and sizes:

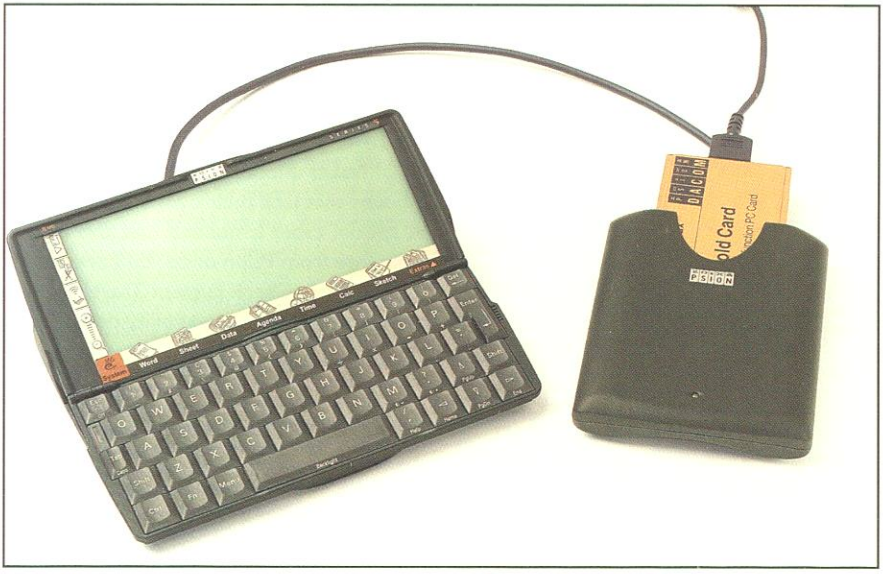
1. **Internal modems**. Like a graphics or sound card, modem cards can be slotted into a PC and allow you to plug a telephone line into your computer, in the same way that you would plug in a mouse or other peripheral. These are no use if you want to get your Psion online, as Psion devices are not fitted with a suitable expansion slot.
2. **External modems**. These are really designed for desktop computers but can also be useful to Psion users. External modems typically connect to a PC via one cable, connect to the phone socket with another, and have a third to plug into AC mains power. They normally have an 'on/off' switch and some flashing lights to tell you what they're up to. Pretty useful, but they do rely on mains power to work. Bear in mind that to use one with an EPOC palmtop you'll need either a special modem cable or a gadget called a *null modem adaptor* (see the boxout on page 66). Also, be aware that some external modems are for use specifically with Apple Macintosh or other non-PC computers, or have USB connectors.

Connecting via infrared, with Psion 56k Travel Modem

Unless the modem has a 25-pin serial connector on it you may have trouble getting the right cable to make the connection, so check before you buy.

3. **Travel modems**. These are designed specifically for use by handheld computers on the move. Essentially, they are small external modems that can run off battery power. There are a few such modems available (such as the Pegasus III), but most Psion users will probably opt for Psion's own 56k Travel Modem (reviewed in issue 27). This pod-shaped modem differs from Psion's earlier rectangular designs in that it doesn't need a cable to make the connection to the palmtop, as it can communicate via infrared. Being battery-powered and cable-less this just leaves the telephone cable to worry about, and therefore makes for a very neat solution. The older, slower Travel Modems have a 'Honda' cable connection that connects into the palmtop's serial port (though not the Revo).

4. **PC Card modems**. These small devices are thicker than a credit card but roughly the same shape. If you have a Series 7 or netBook then your machine has a socket on the right hand side that's directly suitable for one of these cards. If you are a 5mx user then you can use the Psion *PC Card Modem Adaptor* (reviewed in issue 11), which plugs into your Psion's serial port (again with a 'Honda' connection) and allows a PC card to be inserted. For Series 7/netBook users the PC Card option is a good one, but due to the cost of both the modem and card adaptor it may not be the best option for Series 5 users. Revo users can't use it at all, as they lack the physical socket for a cable connection.



No longer the most economical option—Psion's PC Card Modem Adaptor

Connecting with an infrared modem-equipped mobile phone

5. **Mobile phones**. Mobile phones are getting more sophisticated all the time. Most of the high-end phones from the likes of Nokia, Ericsson and Motorola have built-in features such as infrared, a modem and now WAP. The most elegant solution for keeping in touch on the move is to get such a mobile phone, like the Ericsson R320, SH888 and i888, or the Nokia 8810. Other phones with modems built-in, such as the Bosch GSM 908 and the Sagem RD750/M8300, don't have infrared and need a cable in order to connect. Some, such as the Nokia 8110, have infrared capability but no modem. Some older Ericsson phones can be 'upgraded' by plugging a DI27 or DI28 infrared modem adaptor into the bottom of the phone. Ask your phone provider for details.

There is also an option to use the Psion 56k Travel Modem with certain mobile phones that lack their own built-in modem. A special cable is needed, but this is available free from Psion once you have bought the modem. Check current Travel Modem specifications for compatibility details.

We'll of course cover getting connected in much more detail in a later instalment, but for an in-depth look at the options available to mobile phone users, you might like to read our 'Starting up: Mobile communications' feature back in issue 21.

Choosing the right modem

There are several factors to take into account when shopping for a modem. Take a look at the following list and consider which issues are important to you.

Speed. If you're connecting via a mobile phone, you won't currently be connecting at a very high speed. The GSM network has a limit of 9600bps (bits per second) for data. New technologies such as GPRS and 3G will go some way to speeding up the world of mobile communications in the near future, but for the moment a mobile connection works out around *five times slower* than a fixed-line phone connection. It also means that the cost of accessing the web or collecting emails is much higher. If you're not concerned with being in touch while actually on the move, steer away from the mobile phone option and consider a Travel Modem, external modem or (if you have a Series 7/netBook) a PC Card. Look for a modem with a speed of 56k (56000 bits per second).

If you plan to use your connection solely for emails (rather than for web browsing) then the slow speed of a mobile phone connection is less of a problem, with email messages normally taking no more than a few tens of seconds to transmit.

Price. In the UK, a Psion 56k Travel Modem retails at around £170, with the Pegasus III at around £130. A Psion Gold PC Card Modem plus PC Card adaptor will total over £250. An external modem (designed for a PC) costs anything from around £50 and is by far the cheapest option. The downside of this is that the modem and associated cables are less portable—and you'll also need mains power. Needless to say that if price is an important issue you should avoid using a mobile phone-based solution.

Portability. Your best options are the mobile phone or Travel Modem solution. If you're likely to be near a fixed telephone line then go for a Travel Modem. They run on two AA batteries (or mains if there's a socket nearby), the unit is pocketable and you can connect at high speed. If you want to email from a train, in a field or at a client's office, a mobile phone is the way to go, although you'll have to put up with slow and expensive calls. Remember also that the mobile phone option relies on having adequate signal strength to transmit and receive data without interruption.

Style. If you're concerned about this then you can't beat the wireless solution of a palmtop and infrared-equipped mobile phone. Yes, it's slow, but with no wires and adaptors to carry, plug in or lose, it's the ultimate solution.

Connecting a Travel Modem

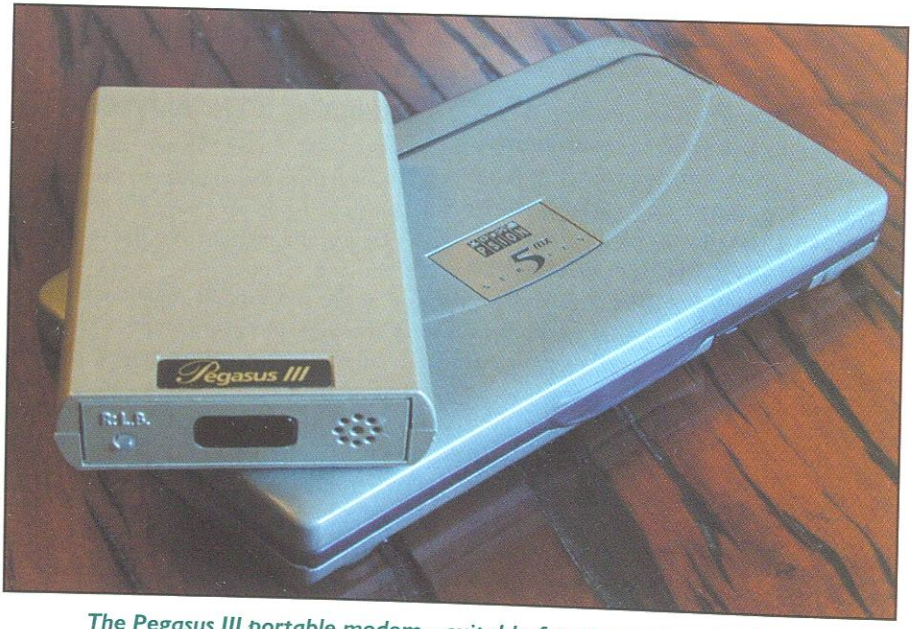
The Psion 56k Travel Modem uses infrared as the link from the palmtop to the modem, making setting up very easy. It's just a case of plugging the modem into the telephone socket and pointing the Psion's infrared 'eye' at the modem. As mentioned earlier, the Travel Modem has a socket that allows for connection to certain mobile phones, most commonly the Nokia and Ericsson range—see the review in issue 27 for more details of cable options. After connecting to your phone line (and, optionally, mains power), all you need to do is turn on your Psion and modem. Once the software is configured, you're away.

Connecting to a mobile phone

The first job is to ask your network operator (the people who send you your mobile phone bill), to allow you to use data as well as voice calls. You'll need to phone the Customer Services team and ask them to "data-enable" your SIM card. There's normally no charge for this service. Typically, you need to allow an hour or so for this to happen. They will then normally inform you that you have a data and fax number. Unless you plan to receive data calls from another computer or want to receive faxes you probably won't need them, but keep a note of them anyway.

Next, you have to make the physical connection. For connecting your phone via the Psion Travel Modem, contact your Psion dealer for the right cable. Otherwise, if it's a direct connection, one of the Psion dealers advertising in *Palmtop* should be able to help. Once you have the right cable, the connection should be obvious: one end plugs into your palmtop's serial port (though not on the Revo, which only allows infrared connections) and the other end to the base of your mobile phone.

Infrared phones with a built-in modem mean that you'll have no worries over wires, but there's often at least one extra operation to carry out—buried in your mobile phone's menus are options to turn on the infrared port and enable the phone to make data calls. You'll probably need to refer to your phone's manual, but here are some common examples:



The Pegasus III portable modem—suitable for connection to a Psion

Nokia 8810: Press 'Menu' and then '9'. Don't close the cover until you see a flashing icon in the top left-hand corner.

Ericsson SH888: Use the two-left/right arrow keys on the phone keyboard to enter the menu system. Scroll to 'Activate IR port' and press YES.

Ericsson R320: Use the two-left/right arrow keys to enter the menu system. Scroll to option 5 and select 'Infrared Port', press YES, select 'On' and press YES again.

Connecting to a PC Card modem

Series 7/netBook users can push a PC Card modem directly into the socket provided and then plug a telephone cable straight into the card. Series 5 users will need to plug their PC Card into the Psion PC Card Modem Adaptor, which in turn plugs into the palmtop's serial (RS232) port.

Connecting to an external modem

Assuming that you have a standard external modem, two of the three connections you need should be obvious: the mains lead and the one that runs off to the telephone socket. Some modems have what looks like two small telephone (RJ11) sockets—one is for the connection to the telephone line and the other is for an extra telephone handset and can normally be ignored.

The third connection is between Psion and modem. You will normally find a 25-pin 'female' connector at the back of the modem. You'll need to adapt your PsiWin cable (or the cable from your Revo docking station) to connect to this. You'll notice that this means trying to plug a 9-pin female connector into a 25-pin female and so you'll need a suitable adaptor. In fact, even a simple 9-to-25 adaptor won't do—what's needed is a null modem adaptor (see the boxout on the next page).

Once you've acquired a null modem adaptor, everything should plug together perfectly. If you've got a more obscure combination of cables and connectors, you may need other 9-to-25 adaptors or perhaps a male-to-male 'gender changer'. These are quite common in the computer world and your local computer store should be able to help.

Connecting to the telephone line

If you're plugging into a standard 'landline', it's worth spending a few moments considering your connection. Unless you've got very old telephone wiring, it should be possible to unplug your phone from a modular socket in order to plug in other handsets and modems. If you obtained your modem from a different country, the connector may not fit your telephone socket and you will need to look for a suitable adaptor. Changing the cable from your modem to the phone socket may not be an answer as some modems have non-standard ones (notably the older US Robotics types).

You may also want to consider a socket doubler, which will allow your telephone handset and modem to share the same telephone point. These are available from telecommunications shops, computer shops and electrical retailers.

Remember that when you are connected to the Internet, your phone is effectively busy/engaged and so other calls won't be able to get through. It may be worthwhile to consider installing a second line, especially

as this opens up other possibilities, such as fax or the ability to speak to someone while surfing the web or downloading files.

Modems don't like having their connection interrupted. If someone picks up a phone extension while you are online then you are likely to lose your Internet connection. Similarly, if your telephone company supplies you with 'Call Waiting', note that the 'beep' that announces an incoming call disrupts data being sent over a modem. You'll almost certainly want to disable call waiting when you're planning to be online for a while. In the UK, '#43#' turns it off and '*43#' turns it back on again. These codes may vary depending on your telephone provider.

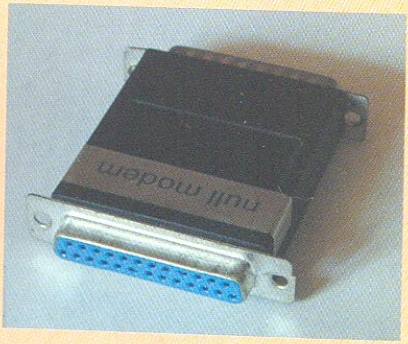
In the next issue, we'll look at how to configure the software on your palmtop to make your first connection, and also at how to select the all-important Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Null Modem Adaptors

The lack of this cheap little gadget has caught out a lot of people in the past. If you own a desktop computer you can just plug your modem straight into the back of your computer—you don't need an adaptor. So why do you need one for your Psion?

With a PC and modem, one end has to be designated as the 'sender' and one as 'receiver'—your PC sends and your modem receives. When Psion designed the connection between their palmtops to other computers, they wired the serial (PsiWin) cable so that the palmtop acts as a receiver. This was done so that larger computers can still be classed as a sender and so that the two could talk to each other. This works fine until you plug a modem into your palmtop. Modems are receivers too, and so you end up with a receiver talking to a receiver.

This is an over-simplification, but essentially a null modem adaptor swaps some of the important wires over, making one side appear to be a sender and allowing the two devices to communicate properly.



Many computer and electronics shops sell null modem adaptors, but they don't all work the same way, as some don't swap all of the wires needed. By far your best bet is to buy Psion's own adaptor, by contacting one of the specialist Psion dealers advertising in *Palmtop*.

Working for a living:

The Financial Consultant

Robert Killington explains how his Psion palmtop earns its keep advising clients on their taxation matters.

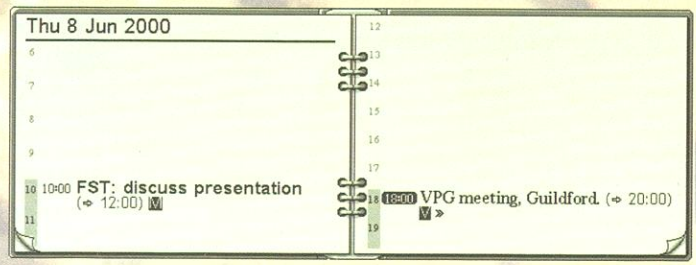
I have been using Psion computers to help organise my work (and life) since 1990, when I bought a Psion Organiser LZ64. It wasn't until the advent of the Series 3a that I upgraded and learnt that the benefits of using a Psion were far more than just a diary, to do list and a way of recording my personal spending. As a reborn gadget freak, I then moved onto the 3c, the 5, and finally the 5mx.

Over the years I've tried numerous third party applications to improve my work and time management, and many of these are described here.

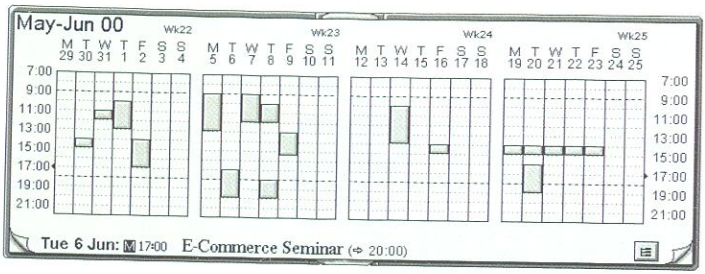
Ensuring I'm in the right place at the right time

As a large part of my work involves meetings with clients, I obviously use Agenda to record appointments. I set 'Preferences' to show appointment end times and I usually also set an 'Entry symbol' to indicate the type of meeting. For example, "M" to indicate a client meeting and "V" for a technical meeting. This enables me to look at the year planner and see if any days are free for holidays or other meetings.

I make extensive use of the Busy view when booking appointments, to see what time is free on any day. This avoids accidentally booking appointments



Using entry codes and appointment end times in the Agenda Day view



Making good use of Agenda's Busy view to check what time slots have already been allocated

or promising to call someone when I won't be available.

Having made sure that I know where I should be and when, I use PalmTop Software's **Street Planner** (reviewed in issue 27) and **Route Planner** (reviewed in issue 26) to prepare detailed route plans. I tend to do this before I travel and print out, if necessary, the route I have to take, or review it on the Psion at convenient stopping points during the journey.

If I've travelled by car, I'll note the start mileage and log the entry in Widget Software's **Timebase** 7 time-logging program (reviewed in issue 17) against the relevant client.

Charging clients for my time

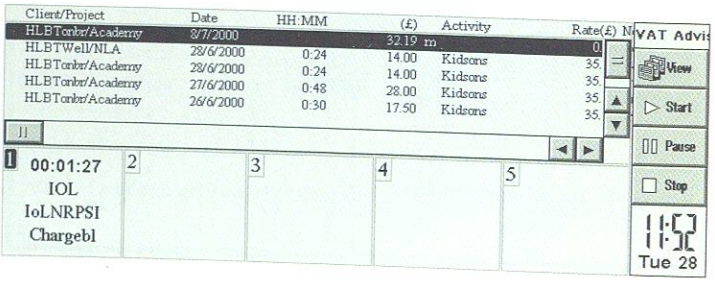
I also use Timebase to keep track of the time I spend working on behalf of individual clients. The program allows me to set up client projects and activities for each one. I can also record expenses and mileage to ensure that disbursements are included in the amounts billed. Timebase will export the accumulated time to a text file, which is then imported into Sheet.

I have a template set up in Word to help produce invoices. The template has an embedded Sheet object, providing an easy means to calculate the amount charged (and the totals) on the invoice.

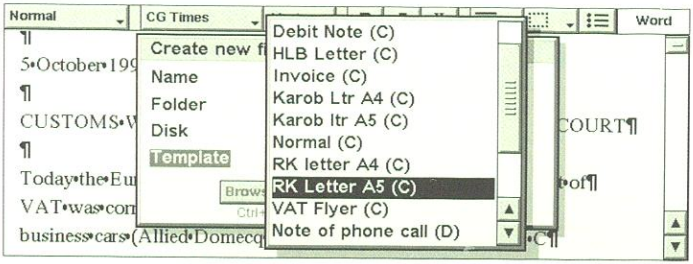
Keeping up with meeting notes

After a meeting with a client, there is always a need to put finger to keyboard to record what took place. The 5mx has proved especially useful for doing this while still on the train. I have set up a number of templates for Meeting Notes, Letters, Memos, etc., which enable me to set up quickly an appropriate format for the file I am working on.

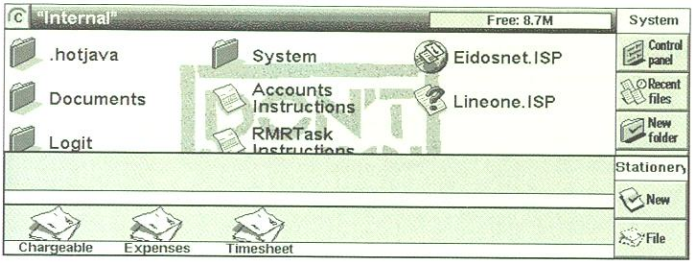
On the Series 5 'Classic' (which had no template feature in Word) I used the



Recording my time accurately, in Timebase



Choosing a file from Word's template list (not available on the Series 5 'Classic')



Selecting a Stationery Pad template—still particularly useful for Sheet templates

Stationery Pad utility to provide templates. This is such a good workaround that I still use it on the 5mx, as it also allows templates to be created for Sheet.

Because I am used to using the 'AutoCorrect' feature in Microsoft Word on my PC, I've found the concept of text entry aids (see page 77) extremely useful. RMR's **Autotext** runs in the background and monitors the entry of shortcuts, which it then converts into the text needed. This is a boon when using jargon or stock phrases. Autotext also works in any document, so if I need to add a signature to an email prepared on the Psion, simply entering the shortcut will add the appropriate signature to the email.

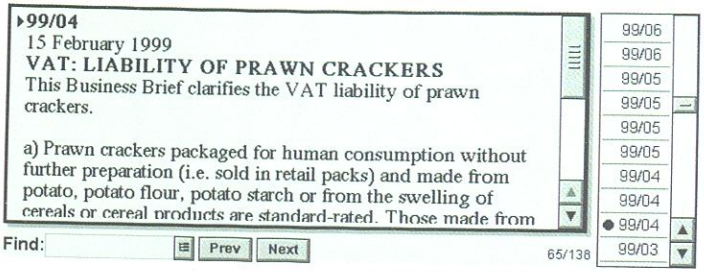
Communicating

I use email a great deal to keep in touch with clients. Because the built-in Email and Contacts applications work so well together, I use Contacts in preference to any of the other available contact management systems.

Keeping up to date with technical matters

I have set up a database using Data in which I keep details of papers published by Customs & Excise that relate to particular technical matters. It's very useful to have this information in an easily searchable form on the Psion and it beats having to carry tons of technical papers when visiting clients.

The Web application is also useful to obtain information from web sites while at a client's premises. By plugging my **Psion Travel Modem** (reviewed in issue 27) into their phone socket, I can access the Internet and download information to show the client, instead of having to send it on to them later. If the client has a printer with an infrared port, documents can even be



A typical Data entry on a technical VAT matter

printed on the spot. If the client doesn't have a suitable printer, the documents can alternatively be faxed directly to their fax machine.

Doing the sums

When discussing VAT (tax) matters with a client it's often necessary to review Returns and how they are made up. This is where Sheet comes into its own. I have set up spreadsheets to cope with both the basic VAT return and more complex matters which require detailed technical knowledge. Colleagues working in direct taxation also use spreadsheets to help both with calculating various tax liabilities and possible ways of saving on tax.

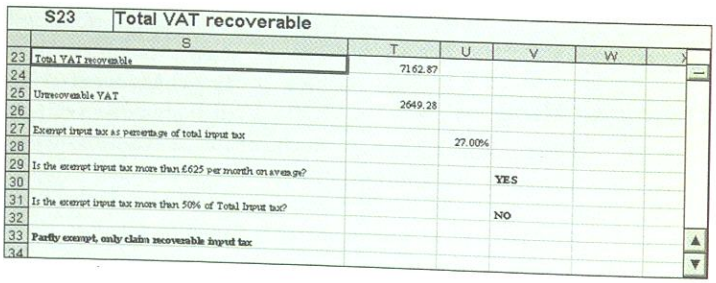
Sheet also helps where an ad-hoc analysis of data needs to be undertaken. Setting up a spreadsheet to review information and undertake a simple analysis of it is usually a quick and simple process, once you become a little proficient with Sheet.

Keeping track of tasks

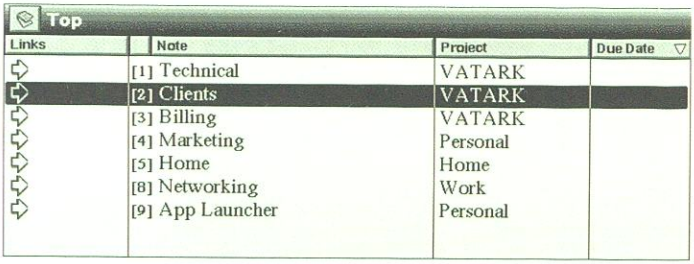
Ever since the EPOC version of Purple Software's **Notepad** (reviewed in issue 22) was launched, I have used it to keep track of projects, client work, etc. I had previously used Notepad Deluxe on the Series 3a and 3c, and felt lost without it on the 5/5mx.

I use Notepad to echo the famous 'TMI' philosophy of time management. Tasks are divided up into various headings such as Client, Billing, Marketing, Networking, Home, Technical, etc. Each of these headings has associated notepads and (usually) links to others. For example, the Client notepad expands to have notepads for each client, and each of these then expand to notepads for the tasks which need to be undertaken for that particular client.

Working through a client's VAT in Sheet



Viewing top level Notepads in Purple Software's Notepad application



Whatever consultancy service you provide, the basics of keeping on top of your work and getting the most from your available time remain much the same. My Psion palmtop is as vital a tool in this area as my mobile phone or ballpoint pen.

Availability and other useful software

Street Planner Millennium - £50 from PalmTop Software - *www.palmtop.nl*

Route Planner Millennium - £50 from PalmTop Software - *www.palmtop.nl*

Timebase 7 - £50 from Widget Software - *www.widget.co.uk*

Stationery Pad - freeware, on all recent Palmtop CDs

AutoText - shareware by RMR Software, £10 - *www.rmrsoft.com*

Psion Travel Modem - £160 - from all major Psion dealers

Notepad - £50 from Purple Software - *www.purplesoft.com*

Here are a few other EPOC applications which may be useful for similar professions:

Contact Manager - shareware by Colin Shearing, £14 - *www.btinternet.com/~colin.shearing*

Dialler (call manager and logger) - shareware by Tony Crocker, £8 - *www.cix.co.uk/~tsteven*

Empower (contact manager) - freeware by Ian Leake, *www.ianleake.demon.co.uk*

Office Log (office communications logging system) ~ £21 from Estuary Technologies, *www.compulink.co.uk/~djoyce*

Plan5 (project manager) shareware by Twiddlebit, £15 - *www.twiddlebit.com*

Financial Advisor (mortgage/pension calculator), shareware by Gary Perlmutter, £10 - *www.psionara.freeserve.co.uk*

FinCalc5 (assorted financial calculations) - shareware by Greg Love, £10 - *www.geocities.com/fincalc5*

In addition, useful Sheet and Word files can be found on www.pocketinfo.org .

Upgrade your Series 7 or netBook

Nigel Wright reveals the ins and outs of upgrading the internal memory and operating system of Psion's sub-notebooks

I always keep a lot of applications running simultaneously on my Psion netBook, and when using the new Opera web browser recently I found myself running out of memory. All of which seemed the perfect excuse to buy a 32MB memory upgrade to expand the netBook to 64MB. The price is around £160, absurd when compared to that of mass-produced PC memory, but reflecting the generally high pricing of all Psion goods. There's a similar upgrade for the Series 7, but it's offered as 16MB only and costs around £60. Few High Street retailers currently seem to be stocking the necessary memory chips, though you'll have little trouble finding them from most of the specialist dealers that advertise in *Palmtop*.

Fitting extra memory

I was horrified to find that no instructions were included with the memory chips, given that there are a number of potential pitfalls for the unwary. Here's our quick guide for those who are happy to carry out the job themselves. *If you are at all unsure on carrying out the procedure then we strongly recommend that you arrange for a dealer to fit the memory.* If you do carry out the job yourself, be sure to read through the entire instructions before proceeding:

1. Back up all the data in your internal ('C:') memory to a desktop computer (as you'll lose all the data when you need to reformat the Psion's 'C:' drive later). CF disks cannot of course be affected by the upgrade process. Alternatively, back up to CF disk, which will make the restore process quicker than having to upload from your desktop PC.

Left hand memory cover removed, ready for upgrade
(right hand cover also shown open, revealing existing memory chip)

2. Switch off your Series 7/netBook, and disconnect it from your desktop.
3. Remove any CF disks, or PC cards.
4. Remove the main battery pack (consult the Psion manual for instructions if you've never done this before).
5. Remove the backup battery from the underside of the machine.
6. Obtain an earth strap and connect it to your wrist (essential to avoid the risk of damage to the delicate electronics from electrostatic discharge). The other end of the earth strap should be connected to a metal radiator (or similar) to ensure that you are properly earthed. If you can't get an earth strap then touch some radiator pipes or any convenient earthed metal-work for a few seconds to discharge any static that's built up in your body.
7. Open the screen to a vertical position to expose the two memory socket covers below it.
8. Remove the *left hand side* memory socket cover that's situated under the screen and behind the On/Off sliding switch. It can be quite difficult to remove, so be sure not to slip and damage the screen or break the memory cover.
9. Hold the new memory module by its ends, between thumb and forefinger.
10. Push the module into the socket gently but firmly (chip side up).
11. Check that it's fully seated in the socket by pushing on the edge of the module's circuit board.
12. Replace the plastic memory slot cover.
13. Re-insert the main battery.
14. Re-insert the backup battery.
15. If you're working with a netBook, insert the CF disk with the master ROM image on it that came with your machine.
16. Switch on and let the unit boot itself.
17. Format the internal ('C') disk using the 'Disk | Format disk...' option from the System screen.
18. If using a netBook, remove the CF disk with the ROM image on it.
19. Restore the contents of the internal disk from your backup.
20. Re-enter your System screen preferences for zoom settings, column widths, etc.

Should I upgrade my memory?

Before upgrading the memory on the netBook there's about 19MB free to store data and run applications, (as the loaded ROM image uses about 13MB of the standard 32MB). On the Series 7 there's around 13MB available before upgrading. The upgrades increase these values to approximately 51MB and 29MB respectively.

Psion palmtops make use of memory in an entirely different manner to a desktop PC, so there is no apparent gain in speed to be had from the upgrade, other than that provided by moving files and applications to internal memory (which is much faster than CF disk for reading and writing data).

If you find yourself running short of memory on a regular basis then you will find this a worthwhile upgrade. If extra storage space is all that's needed then it's far more cost effective to buy a large CF disk (a 128MB CF can currently be bought for about the same price as the 32MB netBook upgrade).

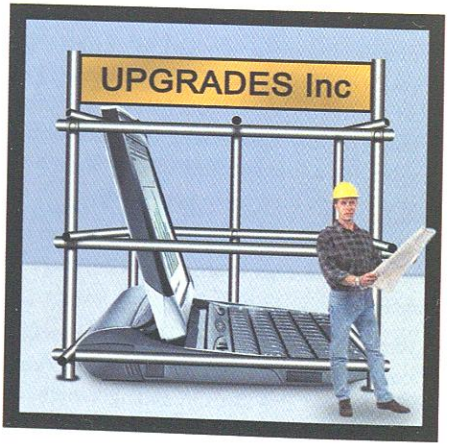
OS upgrades

A major plus point of the netBook was originally the apparent ease with which the operating system could be upgraded, simply by downloading a new ROM image. It has now transpired that the Series 7 can be similarly upgraded, though it's in the form of a software patch rather than a full ROM image. Psion Enterprise haven't published details of what's changed in the updates, and as I've noticed no increased functionality it's safe to assume that these are bug-fix releases only. It's still recommended to upgrade though, as we've heard no adverse reports relating to the new versions.

To obtain the Series 7 upgrade patch (currently build version 756, around 1.3MB) go to: *ftp://193.129.255.39/public/Series7*, and then select either the US or UK version, depending upon your machine type.

For the netBook ROM image file (currently build 156, around 13MB) you can go to either: *ftp://193.129.255.39/public/netbook*, (and then select the US, UK, German or French version), or *www.enterprise.psion.com/public/partner.htm* . Note that you will need to join the 'Partner Program' to get access to the web site, but this is free.

At the FTP site there are separate directories for the netBook and Series 7. Whatever you do, *don't* use the software intended for the wrong machine. Before proceeding with the upgrade, you should of course perform a full backup. To carry out the OS upgrades, follow the detailed procedure outlined in the 'readme' file available from the relevant FTP directories given above, or if you're getting the netBook upgrade from the web site given above, you'll find the instructions directly on the download page.



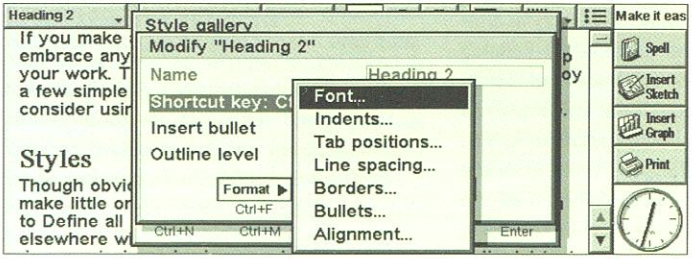
Make it easy on yourself

Steve Clack examines some tools and techniques to speed up your work in Word and elsewhere...

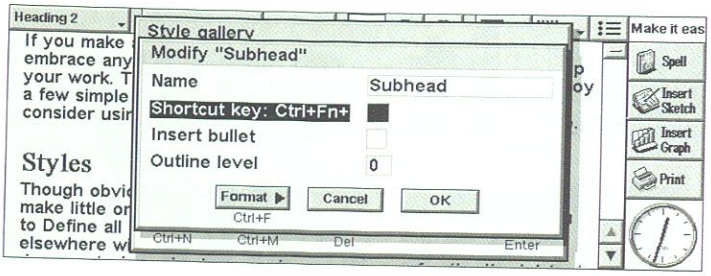
If you make a lot of use of Word, then you'll be keen to embrace any add-ons and techniques that can help speed up your work. To get the very best from Word, you need to employ a few simple working practices within Word itself and also consider using one of several good 'shortcut' utilities available, some of which can also be of benefit in other applications.

Styles

Though obvious to the experienced Word user, many novices make little or no use of Word's 'Style' facility. Styles allow you to define all the main attributes of a block of text, for re-use elsewhere within the same document or in future documents. As a simple example, you may prefer the 'body' text of your documents to appear in the built-in Arial font, rather than the default of Times New Roman. Rather than changing this from the drop-down font menu at the top of the screen every time you start a document, go into 'Style gallery...' on the 'Paragraph' menu, select the 'Normal' style from the list and tap the 'Modify' button. From the resulting dialog you can tap the 'Format' button to change font characteristics, indents, tabs, alignment and so on. Any changes you make will not affect future documents unless you save the existing document as a template, so be sure to do this as described on the next page.



Accessing the necessary dialog to change text attributes within Word



Assign keyboard shortcuts for quick access to your paragraph styles

If you write anything more than plain blocks of unformatted text, you'll want to make further use of styles. Here are some examples of where to use them:

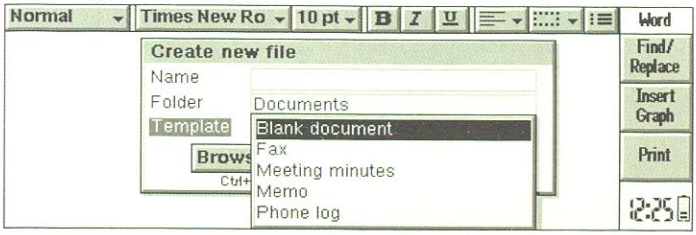
1. For correspondence, use styles for such things as 'Addressee' and 'Return address', with all the necessary indent and tab settings to place these correctly on the page.
2. For headings and sub-headings. Don't forget that the default styles of 'Heading 1', 'Heading 2' and 'Heading 3' can be modified (though they can't be renamed or deleted). You're not limited to setting the typeface and font size: you can add indents, force headings to remain on the same page as the body text that follows them, adjust the spacing beneath them or even force every occurrence of selected heading types to appear on a new page.
3. For bulleted and numbered lists. Although a handy 'quick bullet' button already appears on Word's top toolbar, you can't change the attributes of this style (except by manually modifying the text styles *after* you've tapped the button). By defining your own styles for bulleted or numbered lists you can select all the attributes you want and have as many variations as you like. You'll have to apply them from the drop-down style menu rather than the 'quick bullet' button, but as with all styles, you can assign keyboard shortcuts to make the process easier.
4. For any tabular data that you use regularly, set up complete groups of tab and alignment settings as their own styles. This avoids interfering with the default tab settings that are used for normal text.
5. For 'boxouts' within your text, you can use styles to define borders and background shading or colours.

Remember that styles always apply to entire paragraphs—you can't use them to apply formatting to single words or phrases within a document.

Templates

Unless all your Word documents comprise completely different text and styles, you should be making good use of templates. On current EPOC machines (not the Series 5 'Classic' or Geofox One), Word's 'File | More | Save as template...' command allows you to save the 'skeleton' of a commonly-used document for re-use at a later date. Here's how to set up a template:

1. Consider what parts of a given document you intend to re-use. In other words, which styles and text you have to enter each time around. For a business letter, you'll probably want to define basic text styles, as described above, but also add



Choosing a template to speed your work

any text that appears commonly in your letters. This may include your return address, salutation (you can just put "Dear ??", then remember to substitute the recipient's name when you complete the letter), plus "Yours sincerely" and your own name and job title, perhaps with an embedded Sketch signature at the bottom. If you use a number of standard 'form' letters in your business then you may wish to include the entire body of the letter as part of the template. You can always change or delete any unwanted parts as you work on each document, and this may well be quicker than typing the text from scratch.

2. Once you have all the styles, text and any embedded objects in place, choose 'File More | Save as template...', then choose a template name and which disk you want to save it to. Don't choose 'Normal' as the name unless you want to overwrite the standard (default) template. To access your new template, use 'File | Create new file...', which will prompt you for which pre-prepared template you wish to use.

For some ideas to help get you started on working with styles and templates, open and examine one of the built-in templates, such as 'Meeting minutes' or 'Phone log'. If you have an earlier EPOC machine without the template facility, you can use the freeware 'Stationery Pad' to perform the same job. See page 69 for more on this.

Text entry aids

Once you've added all the necessary paragraph styles and saved them with a suitable template, the next step in automating your work is to reduce the number of keystrokes needed to type in the words and phrases you use regularly. For this you'll need one of the several 'clip text' (or macro) programs available.

With a suitably configured add-on, a letter that may otherwise begin with "Thank you for your letter of 14th February" may instead, for example, be typed as "tk u fr yr ltr of 14th feb". A suitable program will recognise the 'short codes' you have entered and automatically expand them into the full and correct text. Of course, this normally requires you to memorise the shortcuts, but by employing a little logic, with "tk" for "thank", "ltr" for "letter", etc., it's not difficult to memorise several dozen shortcuts.

Desktop computer equivalents, such as Microsoft Word's 'AutoCorrect' facility, will automatically expand each shortcut when you type the [Space] character that naturally follows each word. None of the EPOC programs currently offer this level of convenience, as they all require you to type a

hotkey to expand each shortcut. This makes substitution of short words less beneficial, as in order the replace "u" with "you" it's necessary to enter at least two keystrokes ([U]+[suitable hotkey])—a saving of only one keystroke.

As well as substituting individual words, most programs will allow you to substitute entire sentences and paragraphs, including line breaks, etc. In this way you can build a library of stock sentences and text blocks, which can be a huge time saver for repetitive business correspondence. If you keep a lot of these, print them all out, one after the other, and mark down the keyboard shortcut for each. You can then keep the printout to hand when necessary. To avoid the inconvenience of carrying a printed list with you, another solution is to keep the information in a separate Word file.

The personal touch

Remember that although it's a great productivity booster to recycle your commonly-used text blocks, it's even more important that the people you're corresponding with don't feel that they're receiving impersonal, pre-prepared text every time they hear from you. Use clip-text with care, and always consider whether you're using something that your intended recipient has already seen. You can always re-phrase parts as you go along, making sure that the text still looks natural.

Beyond Word

Although other EPOC applications currently lack direct support for styles and templates, you can still save basic document skeletons for re-use as templates. Just create the 'template' document and save it with a suitable name, then highlight it from the System screen and set it to 'Read only' from the 'File | Properties...' dialog. That way, you'll be forced to use 'Save as...' to create a new editable document, which avoids accidentally overwriting your template.

As far as macros and text entry aids are concerned, most of them work equally well in any EPOC application. Text shortcuts can be particularly useful in Data, where it's not otherwise possible to define pop-up lists of pre-selected text. For instance, if you want to track a record or CD collection in a custom database (see page 50), just include a field for 'category' and use a macro or 'clip text' utility to expand "ro" to "Rock", "cl" to "Classical", and so on. This takes barely more keystrokes than using short codes within your databases, and they will make a lot more sense to other users, as you'll be using meaningful descriptions instead of obscure codes to categorise your entries. Because the descriptive words and phrases are entered automatically, you'll avoid situations such as being unable to search on the "Classical" category because you've misspelt one of the entries as "Clasical".

'Clip text' alternatives

Here are the most common alternatives for adding 'clip text':

Macro5

Covered in detail in issue 25 of Palmtop, Macro5 offers a mass of advanced system enhancements, including its own 'ClipText' facility. This allows the pasting in of up to 255 characters, plus special functions such as configurable date and time stamps, etc. ClipText shortcuts are assigned to three panels of 27 shortcuts, so you're limited

Adding fragments of 'ClipText' with the excellent freeware Macro5

to 81 different items. This can be a limitation, particularly if you use Macro5's myriad other facilities, which may leave you with only a small number to assign to ClipText. Macro5's ClipText facility was probably intended more for whole phrases than single words of text, though it can of course be used for both.

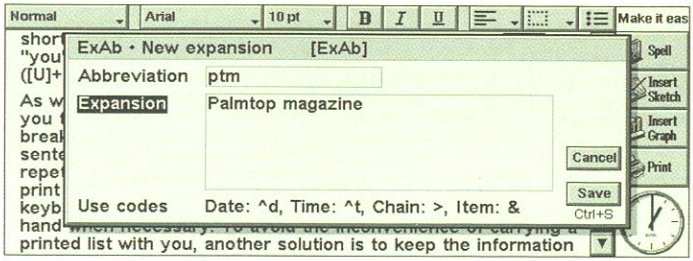
A useful feature of Macro5, other than being powerful and free, is the fact that pressing the configurable hotkey (say [Fn]+[N]) flashes up the relevant shortcut panel directly on screen. From there you can enter the relevant shortcut letter (A-Z or [Space]) without looking, or else glance up at the panel to remind yourself of the shortcut first.

ExAb

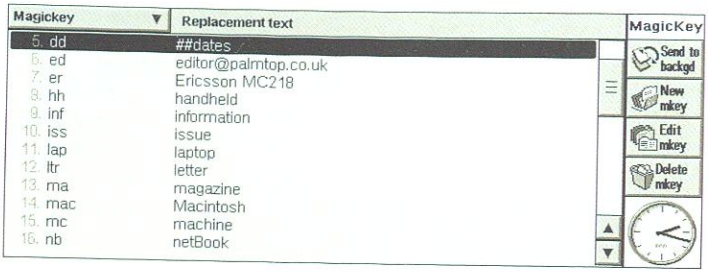
Short for **Ex**tended **Ab**breviations, ExAb is a freeware add-on for Macro5 that allows you to create a separate database of words or phrases to be included as shortcuts. ExAb's database can hold a virtually unlimited number of word and phrase shortcuts, each up to 255 characters in length. To expand text, just type in the shortcut (leaving the cursor at the end of the block) and hit the ExAb shortcut.

More flexible than using Macro5 alone, the only downside is that it takes a second or two for ExAb to 'type in' its replacement text, which makes the process a little too clumsy for effective use on short words, where it's quicker simply to type out the text in full.

ExAb can also paste in date and time stamps, and recent updates have introduced a number of useful plug-in features such as access to case conversion, database linking, document encryption, and so on. It's therefore well worth consideration as a general purpose utility for Macro5 users, particularly as it has a very polished and professional interface.



Adding a shortcut to ExAb's database



A clean and clear interface, showing MagicKeys' list of shortcuts

MagicKeys/Autotext

Available either as 'MagicKeys' from its original author (FatCatz), or re-badged as 'Autotext' by RMR Software, this program offers the most sophisticated solution to automatic text entry.

As with ExAb, text expansion occurs after typing a short code and hitting the program's designated hot-key combination. Unlike ExAb, MagicKeys/Autotext pastes in the text (up to 3000 characters per shortcut) instantaneously, which ensures that your writing flow remains uninterrupted.

Aside from its speed, the interface presents a clean and clear list of current shortcuts that can be popped-up or sent into the background at any time. The list view makes it easier to manage large numbers of shortcuts and can be used as an instant memory aid if necessary. The program is beautifully configurable, including the ability to import and export text blocks and to customise the list view and hotkeys to your own preferences.

Overall, MagicKeys/Autotext is the fastest, easiest to use and most powerful shortcut program currently available, and works happily on all EPOC devices.

And many more...

Numerous other software applications have some kind of 'clip text' facility built in, including **HotKeys** (reviewed in issue 24), **ExtraBars** (reviewed in issue 29) and **Allegro** (reviewed in issue 15).

Which one to use?

If you already own one of the above programs then try their shortcut features first. If you don't already have something then Macro5, with the option of adding ExAb, is a good option that's completely free. If you want the Rolls Royce of 'clip text' managers then MagicKeys/Autotext is without peer.

Availability

Macro5 - freeware by Pascal Nicolas - *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/1215*

ExAb - freeware by Huub Linthorst - available from Macro5 site

MagicKeys - shareware by FatCatz, £10 - *www.fatcatz.tm*

Autotext - shareware by RMR Software, £10 - *www.rmrsoft.com*

Working with Word

In the second part of our series, we show you how to get the most from EPOC's powerful built-in word processor

by Steve Clack

After looking at the basics of Word in the last issue, we'll now move on to create a real document. For this example, we'll start work on a properly formatted letter, which we'll later be saving as a reusable template.

Making a start

To get started, you'll need to create a brand new Word file. As with all EPOC document types, there are two ways to do this:

1. Go to the System screen and type [Ctrl]+[N], then enter a suitable filename in the resulting dialog and choose 'Word' as the program type. This will take you straight into a new Word document, already saved into whichever folder you're currently in.
2. Alternatively, tap on the Word program icon, which will take you into the *last* Word document you were working on. Then select 'Create new file...' from within the 'File' menu. Enter the filename, folder and disk you want to save on then tap on 'OK' or press the [Enter] key. If using ER5, leave the 'Template' option untouched for now.

Although other EPOC file types all offer the same two methods of creating a new document, Word has a significant difference as it's the only program that uses a 'Template' facility. If you want to create a new Word file using anything other than the default template, you have to use method '2' above and select the template type from there. You'll find more on templates in the next instalment of this article and in the companion feature on page 76 of this issue.

A little housekeeping

Before typing into the blank document that stands before you, there are two small housekeeping tasks to perform (if you haven't done so already). First, select 'File | Printing | Print setup...' and choose the printer type you'll be using to produce the hard copy of

your finished document. This setting will influence the typefaces (fonts) that will be available to you when working on the document, so it's best to do it before you start typing. If you don't have a suitable printer available, perhaps because you're working on a document to email or fax, then you can ignore this step.

Secondly, go into 'Printing | Page setup...' and ensure that the 'Page size' is set correctly—usually either 'A4' or 'Letter', depending upon which country you're in.

Starting the letter

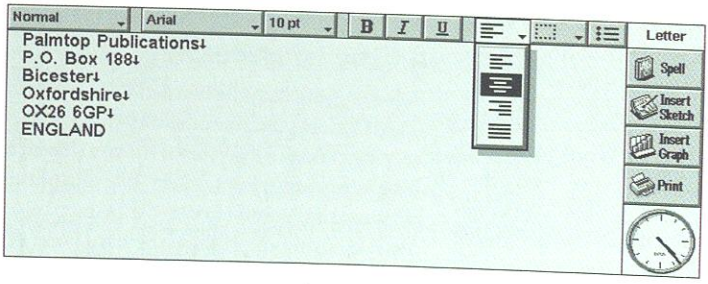
The first thing to appear at the top of most correspondence is your own (return) address. There are a few different ways to format this, so as part of the tutorial we'll try out a few alternative techniques.

First of all, type in your name and address, but instead of pressing [Enter] at the end of each line, press [Shift]+[Enter]. This is a handy little trick to make your Psion see all the lines of the address as a single paragraph. Of course you don't normally even have to press [Enter] at the end of each line, as Word automatically 'word wraps' the text for you, but it's necessary for the address here because the text only takes up part of each line. Pressing [Shift]+[Enter] creates what are known as 'forced line breaks' or 'soft carriage returns', and these will allow us to format the address more easily later on.

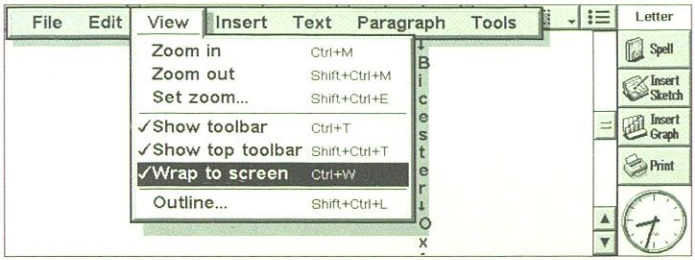
At this point your text should look something like the screen shot at the bottom of the page. It's hard to tell your [Shift]+[Enter] forced line breaks from normal paragraph breaks at the moment, so to make things clearer, go into 'Tools | View preferences...' and check the box to 'Show forced line breaks'. As soon as you tap on 'OK', your text will appear with little downward-pointing arrows at the end of each line, to indicate that these are not normal paragraph endings.

Aligning yourself

The current alignment setting used for your text is known as 'left aligned', meaning that all the separate lines are *aligned* along their left hand side. To refine the appearance of the address a little, tap on the drop-down 'alignment' icon on the top toolbar, and select the second option from the top, which is 'centered' alignment. While you're there, note two further options below: the third one down is 'right aligned', and the bottom one, a little less obviously, is 'justified', which makes the words stretch out so they always fill the full width of the page, as in the article you're reading now. Try out all four options, just to see how they look. Incidentally, you



Setting paragraph alignment



About to deselect 'Wrap to screen'. Note the strange vertical column of text to the right of the dialog

can also change the alignment via the 'Paragraph | Alignment' menu options, if you prefer.

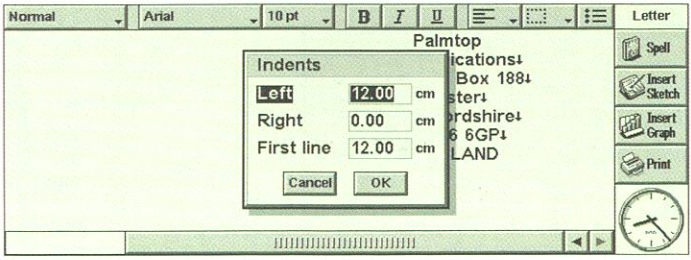
You'll notice that when you change the alignment setting, all the lines of the address are affected at once. This is where the 'forced line breaks' come in, as they make Word treat them as a single paragraph. If we'd used normal [Enter] paragraph breaks, you would have to select each line of the text before applying the alignment command.

Centring your address across the page is one formatting option , but another (generally tidier) technique is to keep everything left-aligned, but indented across to the right side of the page. It's possible to do this with simple 'Tab' markers, but 'indents' are more elegant...

Getting indented

To use indents to move the whole address block across to the right, first change the alignment back to 'left', as it was originally. Next, select 'Paragraph | Indents...', and set both 'Left' and 'First line' options to, say, 12cm. Whenever you tell Word to apply paragraph indents, you must specify the indent of the first line *separately*. This is because some styles have the first line of each paragraph indented a little, such as in the body text in many books and magazines.

As soon as you enter the indent settings and tap on 'OK', you'll probably see the strangest thing happen—your neatly formatted address will rearrange itself into a single column of vertical characters! This is quite normal and caused by the fact that you've got Word set to 'wrap' all text to the Psion's screen width. This feature saves you from endlessly scrolling from left to right as you compose lines of printer-width text



Setting the indent for your address. Here it is set too high—"Palmtop Publications" has been split in two

on a small screen, but it does mean that any tab or indent settings greater than your screen width will force the text to appear 'jammed' onto the edge of the screen. To fix this while you set the indent, uncheck 'View | Wrap to screen'. This allows Word to treat your small screen as a scrollable 'window' on the full page width. With screen wrap off, you'll get a true representation of any tabs and indents you have set. If your text *didn't* turn into a single column, it means you've got the text zoomed down to a smaller size, thus allowing it to fit into the available screen width.

Now scroll across to the right side of the page and check that your lines of text haven't been split up (see the screen shot at the bottom of previous page as an example). If it has, you'll need to re-open the 'Indents...' dialog and reduce the indents a little. If all is well, try increasing the indents 1cm at a time until one or more of the lines *do* get split up, indicating that you're 'hitting' the right hand page edge. In this way, you'll get your address as far over to the right side of the page as possible, where it will look neat and tidy.

Don't worry that you'll be needing to resort to this trial-and-error approach often in Word—you won't. Also, remember that this is your own return address that we're formatting, so once you've got it looking good we'll be saving it as part of a template that can be reused again and again.

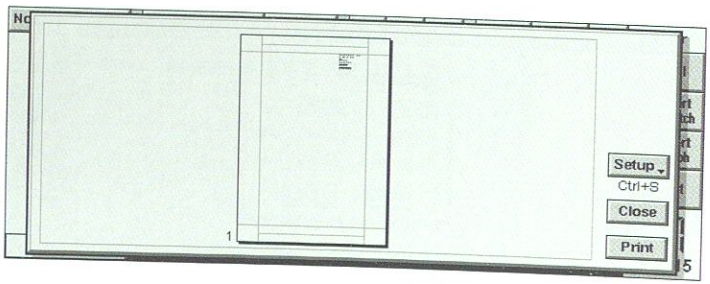
Sneak preview...

Another (albeit less accurate) way to check how things will look on the printed page, other than actually doing a printout, is to use the 'Print preview' feature. Select 'File | Printing | Print preview' at any stage during the creation of your document, and you'll see a miniature image of a sheet of paper on screen, complete with all the formatted text and objects you've created. Of course, it's far too small to read, but it can be a useful guide as to how things are shaping up.

...and back to the text

Before continuing with our document, you'll probably want to turn 'Wrap to screen' back on, to avoid having to scroll from side-to-side as you type. Remember that your formatted address will probably revert disconcertingly to a vertical column of characters, but that part of the document is now complete, so try to ignore it.

In the next issue, we'll add the remaining elements to the document, ready for saving as a template. In the meantime, simply exit and re-save the document until then...



Getting a rough view of how the printed page will look, using 'Print preview'

Exploring the Emulator

Pete Sipple explains what an EPOC emulator is, why you might want one and how to get it up and running

What is an emulator?

An emulator is a piece of software that, when run, fools your computer into believing that it is a different kind of computer. In other words, it allows you to run software from a different operating system. For example, emulators exist to let you run PC programs on the Apple Macintosh, and there are emulators for older computers such as the Sinclair Spectrum.

What Psion emulators exist?

Historically, there have been emulators for most of the Psion range, right back to the early two-line Organiser II XP. SIBO emulators for the Series 3 range and Siena are still widely available. These run under DOS and can be a little temperamental. For details of these older emulators, see our feature way back in issue 3. Series 5/5mx, 7 and Revo users should look for the latest (colour) ER5 emulator that runs under Windows.

Why use a Psion emulator?

The Psion emulators started life as internal development tools, to help programmers create new software. They are now freely available and have many uses to non-developers as well:

- Using a PC keyboard and screen is more comfortable for entering large amounts of data. This is particularly useful if inputting hundreds of Contacts from a paper address book, as many new users do.
- You don't need your palmtop with you in order to access its files. If it's lost or has to be sent off for repairs, you can still use Agenda, Contacts, etc. via the emulator.
- On a modern PC, software can run considerably faster on the emulator than it does on the Psion itself. OPL software developers tend to find that program translation (compilation) is a lot faster.
- Memory and disk space constraints usually vanish, as the emulator makes use of the available space on your hard disk. The emulator can therefore be used to process files that won't fit on your Psion.
- The emulator can be used as a demonstration of the merits of a Psion without the expense of purchasing one, or to allow a colleague to access your information.

Where do I find the emulators?

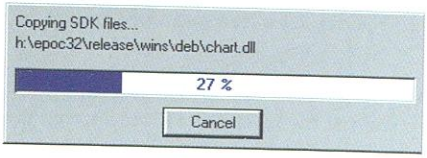
If you're looking for the most up-to-date emulator then you need to visit Symbian's developers web site to get one of the full ER5 SDKs (Software Development Kits). It's not possible just to download the emulator portion—you have to get the whole thing, which can be a very large download. As an example, the OPL SDK weighs in at 27MB. Before you can get it, you'll need to register as a Symbian Developer, but this can be done online and basic membership is free.

There are several 'flavours' of the SDK: OPL, C++ and Java. These all contain the emulator, so unless you have a preference, you may wish to pick the smallest. If you're planning to start writing programs for your Psion, OPL is a lot easier to learn than C++, and the OPL (Organiser Programming Language) SDK contains useful examples and documentation to help get you started.

If the thought of a huge download horrifies you, each SDK can also be obtained on CD for a nominal charge.

Installing and using the ER5 emulator

If you're a regular *Palmtop* reader, you'll know that ER5 is the version of the EPOC operating system that runs on the newest devices, including the Series 5mx, Revo and Series 7/netBook. You will need at least 80MB of free disk space to install the ER5 emulator. It was developed primarily for use with Windows NT4, but will usually run happily under Windows 95 or 98.



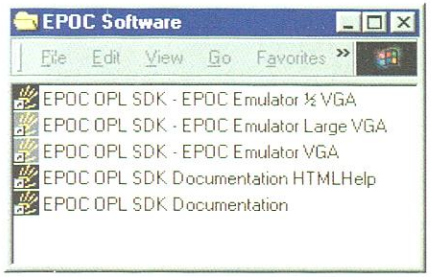
Installing the SDK onto a Windows PC

If you're running a non-Windows computer then you may still be able to use the Psion emulator *within* a PC emulator. As an example, the Psion emulator works quite happily within Virtual PC on an Apple Macintosh.

Once you've got the emulator, install it using the supplied setup.exe file. This will guide you through the installation process, suggesting that you install other components, such as Perl. Many of these will not be required unless you're a developer. If in doubt, go with the minimum SDK options—you can always add other components later.

When installation is complete, you will find that a new program group called 'EPOC Software' has been created, containing documentation as well as three shortcuts for different display versions of the emulator. There will typically be full-screen (800x600), VGA (640x480) and 'Series 5' half-VGA (640x240) versions. Virtually all of the functions of the Series 5mx are found on the emulator, enhanced with colour, of course, and even the sound works.

It's important to note that the implementation of EPOC used on the ER5 emulator differs from that found on the palmtops themselves. The emulator build is known as WINS (a Single process Windows platform). It's normal for programmers to develop software using WINS and then recompile a 'MARM' version for use on the ARM family of processors, which all ER5 computers use. All very technical, but the upshot is that some files and components programmed in C++ will work on *either* the emulator or on a


EPOC Software
File Edit View Go Favorites
EPOC OPL SDK - EPOC Emulator ½ VGA
EPOC OPL SDK - EPOC Emulator Large VGA
EPOC OPL SDK - EPOC Emulator VGA
EPOC OPL SDK Documentation HTMLHelp
EPOC OPL SDK Documentation

A list of installed files

real EPOC computer, not necessarily both. This explains the 'Not found' error you may encounter when trying to run certain commercial applications under WINS.

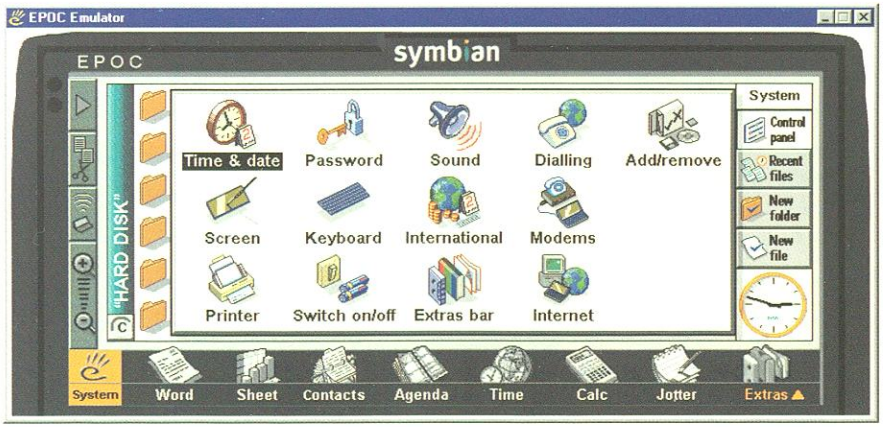
If you're writing programs in OPL then they will probably work fine on both emulator and palmtop. If the program makes use of OPX files, which are extensions to the OPL programming language, you will initially have problems, as these are normally written in C++. Special WINS versions of most OPXs are available if you need them.

The Revo emulator

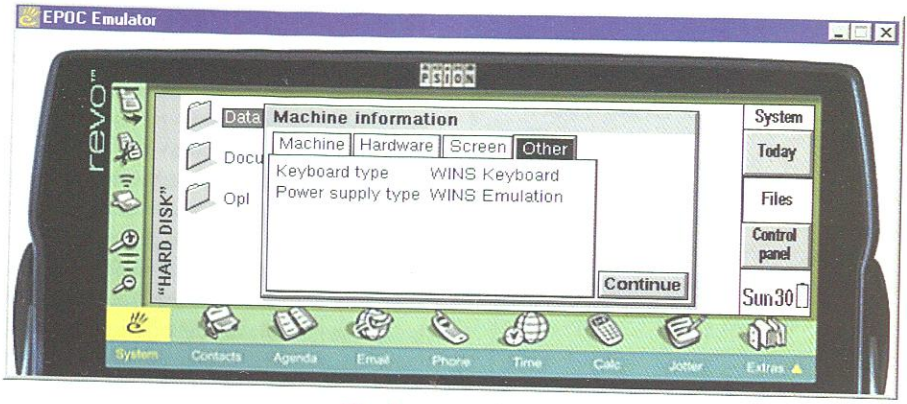
Even though the Revo computer has been available for a while now, the Revo emulator was only released quite recently on the Symbian Developer web site for all to download. Don't be fooled when you see that it's only a 4.1MB download—it's just a set of new resources to go on top of an existing installation of the ER5 SDK. To get the Revo emulator running, you'll need to unzip the files on top of the original SDK files. This is fine unless you want to run both a Series 5mx *and* Revo emulator on the same machine. Luckily there's a workaround for this, thanks to a clever little DOS command. See the boxout on page 89.

Emulator tips

All the emulator settings reside in a file called epoc.ini (usually in \EPOC32\Data) and you can use this file to customise the appearance of the emulator. Full details of the options available can be found in the HTML documentation supplied with the SDK. Possible changes include the ability



The ER5 emulator, running inside a window



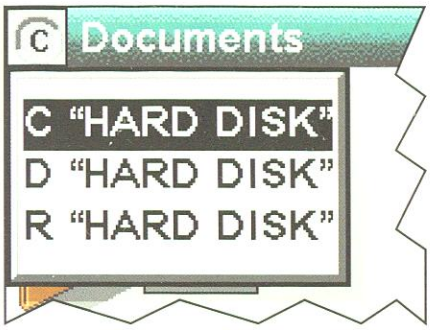
The Revo emulator

to switch from colour to greyscale, and to change the screen size and position of the LED display. Especially useful is being able to add a 'virtual' drive to the emulator. In addition to the 'C' drive, which only contains a few files, I have configured my own emulator to access two additional drives: the 'D' drive points to the folder that contains my Series 5mx PsiWin backup and the 'R' drive contains my Revo backup. That way, I can access copies of any current files from either of my palmtops. This is achieved by adding the following two lines to the epoc.ini file (edited with Windows Notepad):

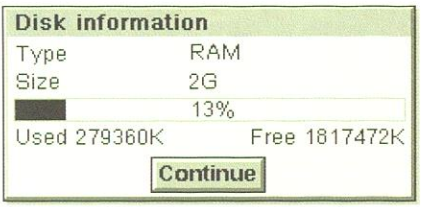
_EPOC_DRIVE_D C:\Epoc32\Wins\Pete\Backup\Internal\

Resources

- Symbian ER5 emulator. See *www.symbiandevnet.com/downloads/SDk/sdks.html* .It is also possible to obtain a CD version of each SDK for a nominal charge—contact Symbian for more information on +44 (0)870 241 0408.
- SIBO emulator (Series 3, 3a/3c or Siena). Available from various sources, including Palmtop CDs.
- For those interested in a stroll down memory lane, the Organiser II emulator can be found at *users.aol.com/psionorg/index.htm*



SUBST drives



Lots of free space...

_EPOC_DRIVE_R C:\PSION\PeteRevo\Pete\Backup\Internal\

Finally, it's well worth taking time to browse through the documentation mentioned earlier. This installs itself into the \sysdoc\emul\group folder and is named emul.html. It explains all about the 'debug' functions that developers use to keep track of bugs, the hotkeys (such as [F1] to bring up the menu bar) and how to configure the emulator to browse the web using your PC's modem.

A little juggling—using two emulators together

To install the Revo emulator to use *in addition* to the standard version:

1. Make a new folder, say '\RevoEmulator'.
2. Click on 'Start | Run' and enter the line "SUBST H: C:\RevoEmulator", where "H:" is a drive letter that is not in use and "C:\RevoEmulator" is the new folder you have just created.
3. Run the SDK setup program again, but instead of installing to 'C:', install to 'H:'.
4. Once installed, unzip the Revo files over the top of the existing files in the 'C:\RevoEmulator' folder.

To run the Revo emulator, you'll have to remember to SUBST your C:\RevoEmulator folder over to drive H: again. When you run the Revo emulator, you are actually running a batch file called e32-sys.bat. You may wish to add the line:

SUBST H: C:\RevoEmulator

to the top of the batch file, so that the SUBST command is automatically run each time you use the emulator.

Note that installing a second SDK creates a lot of duplicate files on your hard disk. It is also necessary to change a setting in your PC desktop's 'path'—consult the 'readme' file that comes with the Revo emulator for more details.

Win an 80MB CompactFlash!

1. *Which EPOC game is included in the R380?*

2. *Which reference work, now available for EPOC, took 20 years to create?*

3. *Who or what is 'Goby'?*

Expand the capacity of your computer by winning an 80MB CompactFlash!

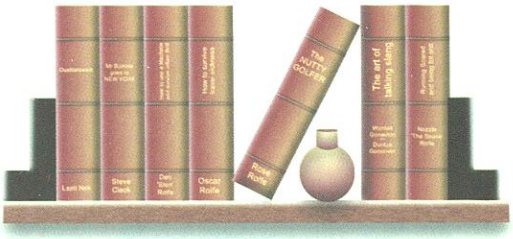
Just answer the three questions above and send your answers on a postcard to Palmtop Publications, PO Box 188, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 6GP, ENGLAND.

We can only accept entries by postcard, and all postcards must be clearly labelled COMPETITION 30. Any entries received by means other than postcard will be discarded. Please include a contact telephone number on your postcard. Anyone posting multiple entries will be disqualified.

All entries must reach us by 30th September 2000. The decision of Palmtop Publications is final. Last issue's winner was Andy Palmer of Middlesbrough. *The correct answers were: 1. Wireless BitMaP, 2. Crystal, Quartz and Pearl, 3. Polaris.*

Competition sponsored by Expansys Ltd.
Visit www.expansys.co.uk

Worth a Read



John Woodthorpe begins a new series looking at the expanding world of electronic books

Interest in electronic books (often abbreviated to 'ebooks' or 'etexts') has increased considerably over the past year or so, as has the number of applications available to read them on all platforms. In this regular column I'll keep you up to date both with news of reader applications for EPOC and sources of electronic books and texts.

In case you're new to the concept, an ebook or etext has certain characteristics:

1. It's usually fairly large—if the amount of text is small, it's simpler to distribute it as a Word file, plain text or email.
2. It's usually highly compressed, making the most of your palmtop storage space and of the fact that the ebook is likely to be 'read-only'.
3. It's usually in one of several standard formats, as mentioned below.

A small correction

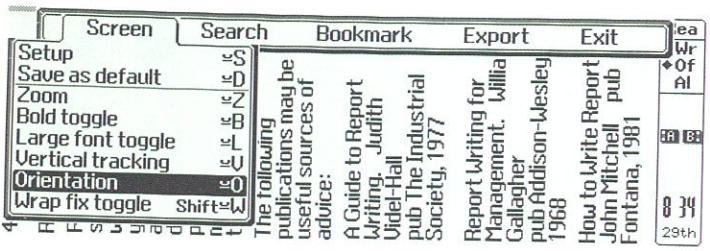
Before going any further, I need to correct one of the comments in the TomeRaider review in issue 29, in which I said that there isn't a single keystroke command to move down to the next screen. No sooner had the issue appeared than several people emailed me to point out that the [Enter] key does exactly that! I'll have to admit that I missed this change—previous versions didn't do this, with [Enter] being used instead to go to the next chapter.

Reader alternatives

There are several ways to read ebooks on a Psion or EPOC palmtop, including:

- **EBook**, available from *www.shoresystems.net/palmtime*
- **VReader5**, available from *www.armlink.ndirect.co.uk/vreader5.htm*
- **ERead**, available from *pda.tucows.com/epoc/adnload/031-014-009-010.html*
- **TomeRaider**, available from *www.tomeraider.com*

Despite all being designed as specialised ebook readers, sadly none of these achieve the functionality and flexibility of the old **Reader** application for the Series 3 range of palmtops. Even though this hasn't been supported



Reader for the Series 3 range—still the standard by which other applications are judged

for a few years now and the author seems to have disappeared from the Psion scene altogether, Reader is still available from *freespace.virgin.net/ro.cutler/reader.htm* as the original unregistered shareware application. To my mind it was almost perfect as an ebook reader in that it gave all the necessary control over page orientation, font appearance and size, bookmarks, searching, indications of where you were in the file and control over line wrapping. The EPOC alternatives offer varying combinations of these features but none are as comprehensive. We'll look at each of them in more detail in a future column.

File formats

This is one of the key differences between the various applications, with each one handling a different selection of the various ebook file formats:

DOC files are the ebook standard in the Palm/Pilot world, with the format nominally controlled by Aportis, who bought the rights to the very first DOC reader. The files have the extensions '.PDB' or '.PRC'.

TCR files are those created for the Psion Series 3 Reader application. TCR files normally have the extension '.TCR'.

TR files are those created explicitly for TomeRaider, and have the extension '.TR'. Although TomeRaider was not designed as a pure ebook reader, it performs the function quite adequately.

All three formats are tightly compressed, and encoding software is available for several desktop operating systems.

Program	Formats supported
EBook	Plain text, DOC, TCR
VReader5	Plain text, DOC, TCR
ERead	Plain text only
TomeRaider	TR only

Where to find etexts...

A good starting point is the **TUCOWS** site (*www.epocsoftware.com*), which is gathering collections of files in TomeRaider and TCR format, or **PocketInfo** (*www.pocketinfo.org*), for TCR and PRC files. The fact that some Palm/Pilot DOC etexts can be handled increases your options considerably, and it's well worth using the search facility on **PalmGear HQ** (*www.palmgear.com*). Another useful site specialising solely in electronic texts is **Memoware** (*www.memoware.com*).

If you want to start from scratch with raw text files, Project Gutenburg is the place (*www.promo.net/pg*). It can truly claim to

have started the whole electronic book scene in 1971, when Michael Hart began converting a vast number of out-of-copyright books into plain text. Their slogan is "Etexts Readable By Both Humans and Computers Since Before The Internet" and they are still going strong after almost 30 years. Project Gutenburg are currently releasing around 50 new etexts each month: some of these are 'classics', others might perhaps be best described as 'worthy' rather than exciting, but there's bound to be something to interest you.

Most ebooks you'll find available are old enough to be out of copyright and are given away for free. This has the advantage that no one has to worry about copy protection, which is a major concern for the commercial providers of more modern works, as we'll see in a future column.

Also worth a look are:

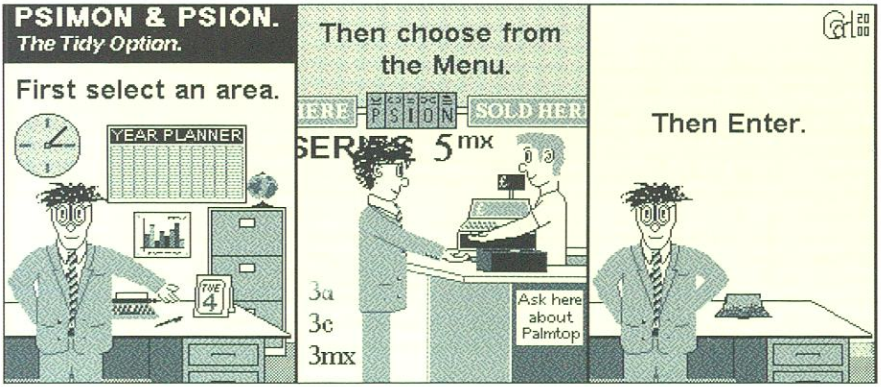
www.cs.cmu.edu/books.html, *www.torget.se/users/a/andersb/ebooks.htm* and *epocbooks.4office.net*.

How does ebook compression work?"

One of the primary benefits of ebooks is that they're highly compressed, ensuring that they occupy as little storage space as possible.

Imagine a sentence of plain text, "The cat sat on the mat", normally occupying 22 bytes of space in a file. By examining the way words and parts of words are used, it's possible to reduce the sentence to "The", "c", "at", "s", "on" and "m", with appropriate number indexes to tell the reader software how to reconstruct the original text. The reduced form here might occupy 10 bytes for the text fragments and perhaps another dozen for the index. Not an overall saving in this case, but as the text size grows the savings can be dramatic.

Although the internals of the TCR, TR and DOC formats are rather more complicated than this, most compression systems work along the same basic principle, of stripping out repeated and redundant information.



Hot tips for hot games

In this ongoing series, we invite a game author to share some winning tips and strategies

No Man's Land, by Great Ape Software

Managing your army

Building

- When you start building, half of the money is taken up front and the other half is taken gradually as building work is completed. If there is no money available for this second half of construction then the building work will slow down or stop, so don't go spending money elsewhere while it is still needed to complete building in progress.
- When you start building, your balance can go negative. Use caution when this happens, as when your balance is negative all building work and tank production will stop until it is positive again.

The most important time to remember the above points is when building your first few oil wells—be very careful not to spend money that is required to complete building work.

Know thine enemy

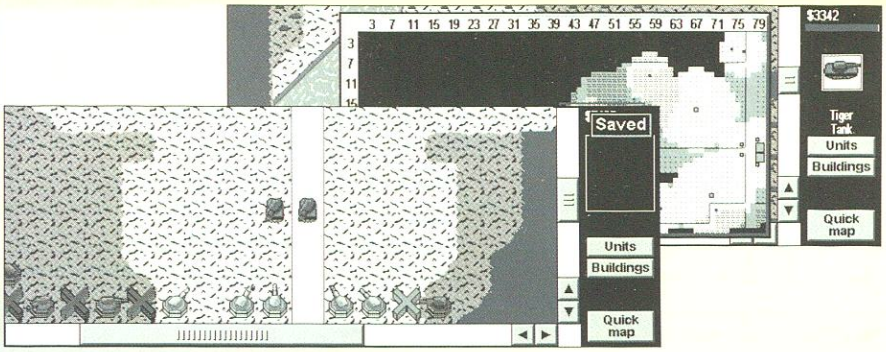
- The important point to take in is that the computer 'player' works to exactly the same rules as you do. Think about what harms you the most—the same thing will harm the enemy too.
- The computer opponent has the same limits on vision as you do. If you can prevent the computer's reconnaissance units from seeing your oil wells and base then it won't know where to attack.
- The computer player does not always follow the same strategy. It randomly decides how much effort to put into building oil wells or tanks and whether to go for an all-out attack, to send out smaller skirmish squads or to sit back and amass a larger army.

Resource management

The critical decisions you have to make, particularly in the early stages of the game, are whether to build more oil wells, more defences or more tanks.

No Man's Land?

The aim of No Man's Land is simple: to wipe out the enemy before they wipe *you* out. In brief, to do this you need tanks. To build tanks you need tank bases, and to finance the whole affair you need money from oil wells, which, among other targets, the enemy are always attacking. See the documentation with the game for full details. No Man's Land costs $49 (around £32) from *www.greatape.com*, and was reviewed in issue 25 of *Palmtop*.



Do what you do well

- If you go for an early build-up of tanks, make sure you use them to make an early and effective strike on the enemy's wells.
- If you choose to go for an early build-up of wells, make sure you can defend them. Turrets are more cost effective than tanks in a battle: one or two turrets per well, plus a small squad of tanks that can be summoned to help out as required is often sufficient.

Reconnaissance

- You need as much information as possible on what's going on around you. Send out tanks in ones or twos as reconnaissance patrols to find the oil fields and also where the enemy is building.

Fighting talk

The upper hand

- Whenever possible, only fight when you have the upper hand. If two groups of tanks meet, whichever is the stronger will not only win the local conflict but will also suffer the least overall damage.

Make sure your attacks count

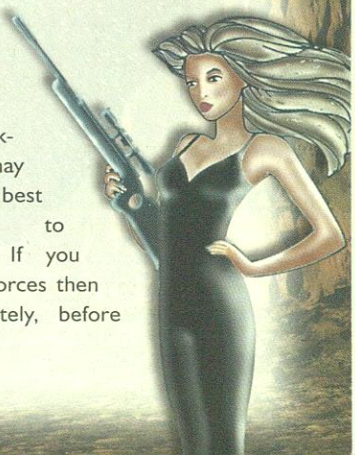
- If you're going to launch an attack then make sure it counts: if you attack an oil well then make sure you have the strength to destroy it. When under attack, the computer will call up any available reinforcements to help out—you may initially think you have the upper hand, but when these reinforcements arrive you may find your attack force annihilated.

Make the enemy pay for mistakes

- If the enemy launches an attack that they can't win, make them pay the highest price possible. The attacking force will try to retreat once they know they are beaten, so anticipate this move by placing your tanks in their way.
- Even when the enemy attack is successful, try to destroy as many of their attacking units as possible. Even if you've lost a building, you may still have won the battle if the enemy has lost a lot of tanks.

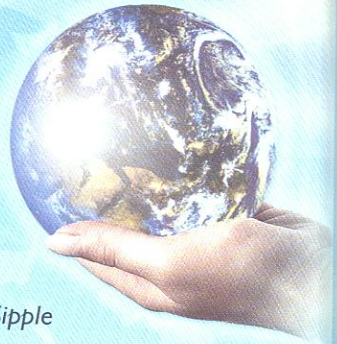
Counter Strike

- If you have just inflicted heavy losses on an attacking force, they will be seriously weakened, and this may well be your best opportunity to counter-attack. If you have sufficient forces then attack immediately, before they can rebuild.



On the NET

Our regular look at what's happening online, and where to point your browser



by Pete Sipple

When I first started this column back in 1995, the Internet was a very different place, little more than a large number of newsgroups and a small handful of web sites. With each passing month, I see more and more EPOC sites springing up, no doubt due to the increasing amounts of free web space and a whole stack of new tools available for webmasters. It's now easy to add a chatroom, online forum or mailing list to your site, all for free. Development of new software has (on the whole) taken a back seat as Psion enthusiasts turn their attention to creating a 'killer' web presence. I must be getting old—I'm now recognising the names of this new breed of Psion webmaster and remembering when they were asking 'newbie' questions in newsgroups years ago. It's good to see that the competence and confidence of computer users everywhere is improving with time, and that the Psion newcomers of the mid-1990s have become today's experts...

Psion
Psion and Symbian Products

Category: Psion
Type: **Listed**

Founder's Message

PSION

Discussions of all Psion and Symbian products.

Founder's Personal Home Page

Last edited by: pigpogm

Overview

Online Now (7 members) view all online

Click on name to talk now: davidjbarnard, moonabbas, jonsegal, AntonyChung1, JamiePsion, freebarney80, kovalevich

Recent Messages post | view all

Click here to receive messages by email.

Aug 2 **Re: POP3 Account Query** -**r_calvanese**
I am in the u.s. and have been searching for a free isp dial up service

Jul 24 **Re: 5mx Web 2 connection problem** -**davidarfur**
I use totalise.com for my ISP, although I use it only with a mobile, but

Jul 24 **Re: POP3 Account Query** -**fergusgf**
Not sure if this is any help to you, but if you are abroad and you can

Jul 24 **5mx Web 2 connection problem** -**fergusgf**
Browser: Web 2 (49) as supplied with Psiwin 2.3 CD Modem: Dacom PCMCIA

Jul 20 **Re: iMac Connectivity** -**davidarfur**

The Yahoo Psion Club

Chat becoming a whisper?

The Psion newsgroups have been relatively quiet of late. Is this because there's now so much content on the web that we can all find what we're looking for? Or is it that some of the chat traffic is now moving from the traditional Usenet newsgroups to other locations, such as the online Psion club at Yahoo (*clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/psion*)? Does anyone else (besides me) remember one of the very earliest meeting points?

"In my early days as a Psionist and shareware author, I used to visit the Psion forums on Compuserve. What happened to these? Are they still as busy as they were then?" (schmidt_rg@yahoo.com)

"The Compuserve Psion forum is no longer a separate entity. The volume of message traffic dropped dramatically with the rise of cheap Internet access, and it has now been absorbed into the 'Palmtop' forum - section 22, Psion Support." (m-mcconnell@clara.co.uk)

If you haven't visited an old favourite online forum or newsgroup recently, maybe it's worth another visit? There's a lot less traffic but also a lot less rubbish.

Worthy mentions

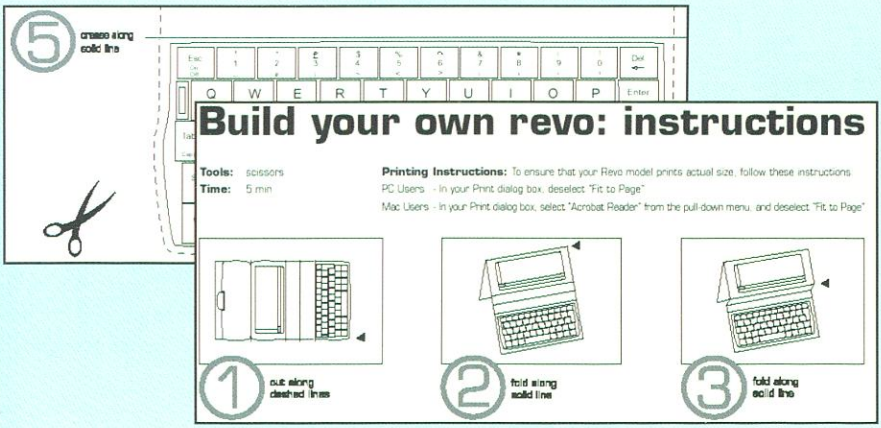
Other sites worthy of a mention this time around include:

EpocBooks - A good example of a well laid-out site. With listings in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Latin, this is the place to look for etexts: novels and reference documents that you can read on a Psion (see 'Worth a read', starting on page 91). Updated monthly, the site also contains short stories, poems and song lyrics. *www.epocbooks.com* .

Frevo - Another great source for Revo users, the main emphasis is on free software. It has an expanding review section, but also useful are the Frequently-Asked-Questions and the top ten freeware list. Well thought out and well worth a look. *www.mirrormere.com/frevo* .

Free Revo!

And finally... A free Revo in just five minutes? You owe it to yourself to take a look at *www.psionusa.com/PersonalMobility/Revo/CutoutRevo.pdf* .


5
crease along solid line
Build your own revo: instructions
Tools: scissors
Time: 5 min
Printing Instructions: To ensure that your Revo model prints actual size, follow these instructions
PC Users - In your Print dialog box, deselect "Fit to Page"
Mac Users - In your Print dialog box, select "Acrobat Reader" from the pull-down menu, and deselect "Fit to Page"
1
cut along dashed lines
2
fold along solid line
3
fold along solid line

Hints & Tips

Every item published in this section wins the author TWO free issues added to their subscription!

Powerpoint on a Psion

I've found that EPOC Word makes a very capable 'Powerpoint' presentation substitute. Create a new template Word file and use this to prepare the layout and format of your pages for the presentation in the normal way. Give the 'slides' (files) you create logical names in alphabetical order, such as 'slideA', 'slideB', etc.

Now for the clever bit. On the System screen, make sure 'Tools | Preferences | Open multiple files' is set to 'Enter'. This allows multiple files to remain open at the same time. Open up all your 'Presentation' files by tapping on them on the System screen in *reverse* order.

Select the first presentation file (e.g. 'slideA') and then simply tap the 'Word' application icon to move to each successive 'slide'. To go back a slide, use [Shift]+[Word].

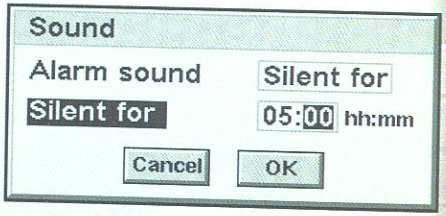
Given that Word allows embedded Sheet, Sketch and even Record files, you can actually create a very sophisticated presentation—in full colour, if you own a Series 7 or netBook.

Adam Jackson, Shenley

Silent once more

In issue 26, Htun Hlaing asked about 'Annoying alarms', and the suggestion was to temporarily switch off all sounds via 'Control panel | Sound' and then remember to switch the sound back on when needed.

My alternative suggestion is to go into Time and select 'Tools | Sound' (or use [Ctrl]+[S]). In the dialog box you can set 'Alarm sound' to 'Silent for' and then select how long you want your Psion to be silent for, up to maximum of 24 hours. When the 'silent period' has passed the sound will automatically be switched back on again.

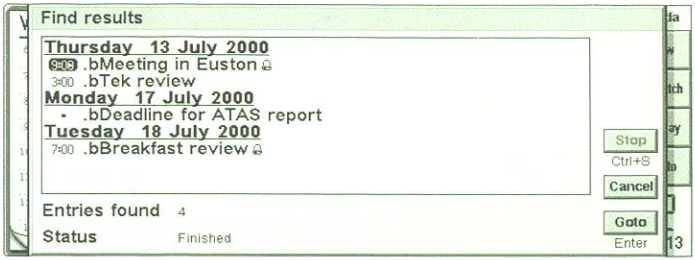


Five hours of blissful silence...

Any alarms occurring in the 'silent period' will activate as normal, but without the sound, and you will be able to respond to them in the usual way: either immediately, by noticing the display or flashing red recording LED, or when you return to your Psion. Past alarms, by the way, may be viewed in Time by selecting 'Edit | View past alarms'.

To facilitate this technique, I have recorded a simple macro in Macro5, enabling me, from any application I happen to be in, to bring up the 'Silent for' dialog box quickly.

Poul-Werner Dam, Vejrumstad, DENMARK



Filtering Agenda to show only business entries

Filtering Agenda

It's all very well to keep one Agenda for work-related entries, one for personal, with yet another beamed over from my partner's Revo. But constantly switching between them is a major hassle, and items can get missed unless they're 'alarmed'. I've found that it's simpler to use a single file and have a set of personalised prefixes for each entry.

For example, for a work (business) entry I start the text with ".b", e.g. ".bMeeting in Euston". For a personal entry, I use ".p", e.g. ".pDinner with Adam". It's then easy to use Agenda's 'Find' function to list upcoming entries in either category—a useful overview of commitments.

The system's extensible in several ways. Extra codes can be added, e.g. ".w" for entries concerning my wife. Sub-codes can be used to refine the filtering process further, e.g. ".ba" for items relating to project 'A' and ".bb" for those for project 'B'.

It's not a particularly attractive solution and it does require a moment's thought before starting to type, but it works well for me!

David Hall, Rotherham

Switching disks in a hurry

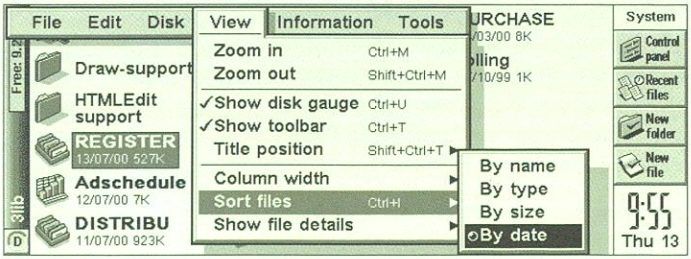
In the System screen, a quick way of switching between EPOC disks is to use [Ctrl]+[Q]. I see so many people struggling to tap on the little disk letter box at the edge of the title bar, when one of the easiest key combinations possible is ten times quicker.

Easy to find

Also on the System screen, leave 'Sort files' set to 'By date' and you'll find that within any given folder the document files you use the most are always near the left-hand edge of the display, making them easier to spot and tap on.

John Fuchs, Feltham

Spotting your most frequently used files



Q&A

Get your Psion and EPOC-related questions answered by our editorial panel...

Database conversion woes

Q On my PC I have some databases stored in Microsoft Works 4.0 which I would like to transfer as Data files onto my Psion Series 5. Of course, PsiWin doesn't recognise MS Works files directly. However, Works allows me to save files into other formats. One simple database I saved in 'comma separated values' format (.csv) converted easily to the Psion. Other files on my PC have commas as part of the entries, so 'csv' format is no good.

According to the file types listed by PsiWin, it should convert dBase 3 and 4 (.dbf) files from *and* to the Psion. I've converted one from the Psion into Works format perfectly, but if I save the same file in dBase format on the PC and then try to convert it back again to the Psion, I can't. Either the file is simply copied across and then can't be opened on the Psion, or I get a message saying that PsiWin doesn't recognise or can't convert this type of file.

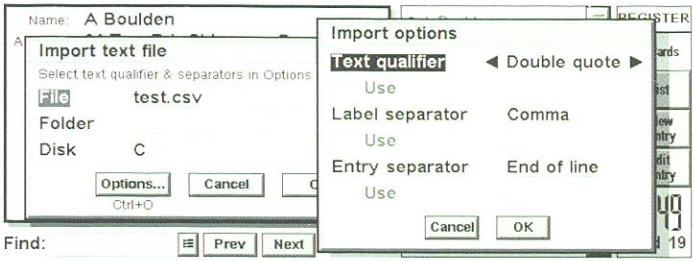
Jim Medcalf, Bromley, Kent

A **When PsiWin's convertors let you down, the first thing to try is to manage without them altogether. Especially in this instance, given that the file can be reduced into a delimited text form and given Data's own good text import options.**

Handling embedded commas in entries is actually very easy and the problem was solved many years ago. The CSV file format, more often than not, includes double speech marks around each field, i.e. the delimiter is effectively ","" rather than a single comma. For example, a line from a typical CSV text file might be: "Steve Clack","m","Palmtop Pubs, PO Box 188, Bicester, Oxon, OX26 6GP".

Of course, there's still the possibility of confusion if your entries contain speech marks, but even then it's usually possible to make progress using an infrequently used character of your choice, e.g. [Tab] or ^, as the delimiter, and then telling Data what to look for.

Examine the CSV file being produced by Works in a suitable text editor (such as Notepad) and check the speech marks are being produced correctly and that there are no confusing embedded speech marks in the entries themselves. After copying this file onto the Psion, within Data, use 'File | More | Import text file...' and tap on 'Options'. Check that the text qualifier character (whatever is being used to 'bracket' each text field) and label separator character (the delimiter between consecutive text qualifiers) are both set correctly. The default of 'Double quote' and 'Comma' is usually sufficient.

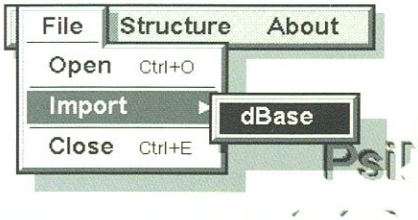


Manually importing a CSV text file

In this way you can import long entries with full punctuation, including commas.

Alternatively, you may like to note that a new (freeware) program called PsiDat has been released, which offers more extensive text import/export and direct handling of dBase 3 and 4 database files. You can download it at *kevin.millican.net/Home/PsiDat.htm* .

There's rarely a magical, all-encompassing solution to database transfers—most problems are solved with a combination of trial and error, lateral thinking and being prepared to approach difficulties from more than one direction.



Importing dBase databases directly in the PsiDat utility

Access denied

Q Each time I do a backup to my Windows PC I get a message saying 'Unable to backup C:\Documents\xxx file. Access is denied.'

It seems that every time I do a backup, more and more files are popping up with this message. I might add that some are program files and that none are set to 'read-only'. It seems that pretty soon I won't be able to backup *any* files. Even now I don't have a backup that I can rely on.

Jim Roberts, Monroe, WI, USA

A **We've also noticed this error cropping up on one of the editorial PCs. It's a PsiWin bug and we suspect that it's getting confused (possibly by files that were read-only at some point in the past, either set that way manually or installed from CD). We effected a cure by going into the '\Psion' backup folder on the PC's hard disk and deleting the existing backup copies of these troublesome files. PsiWin backup then proceeded normally.**

Three in one

If I may, I have three questions for your editorial panel:

Q 1. When I create a Word document with embedded sketches and graphs and then try to convert it to Microsoft Word 97 using PsiWin 2.2, the sketches get converted nicely but the graphs disappear completely. What can I do to preserve them?

2. When I try to print from my Series 5 to a Canon BJC80 printer, I get a few extra lines inserted between each line of text. Regardless of whether I select the LQ option the result is the same. When I print via PC the output is fine. Any suggestions?

3. I have a laptop networked to a desktop, with a printer attached. How can I print to this networked printer from my Series 5? I've tried, but nothing happens.

Chris Abel, Newcastle, AUSTRALIA

A **Three questions at once is no problem for our panel. In order of asking:**

1. Graphs are produced in Sheet objects in a fashion specific to EPOC. Although they can 'show through' into Word documents in which they are embedded, they can't (with the current version of PsiWin) be converted into matching Excel objects in Word on a PC. If you're desperate, consider displaying the graph in Sheet, grabbing the screen in the usual way ([Ctrl]+[shift]+[Fn]+[S]) and then importing the resulting EPOC picture file into an embedded Sketch object instead, as shown below.

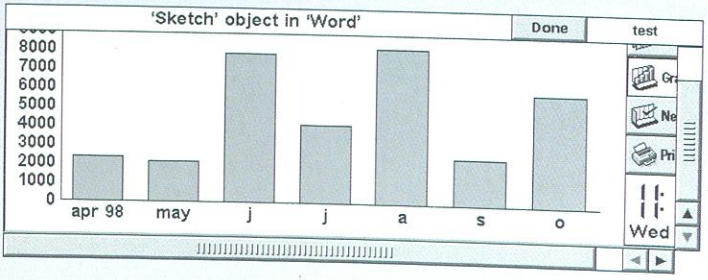
2. The built-in printer drivers are known to have a number of bugs. Our printing article on page 44 details a third party replacement which works much better.

3. To do this it's necessary for the printer to have a network IP address, e.g. 169.254.1.4. In this case the PC might be on 169.254.1.1 and the laptop on 169.254.1.2. The Windows 'default' printer has to be set to the network printer that you wish PsiWin to use.

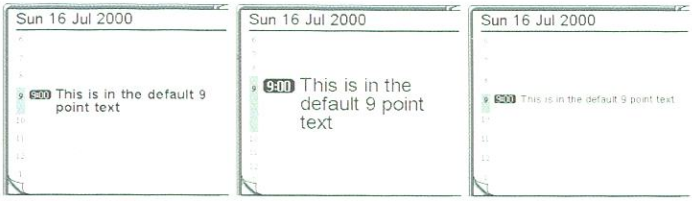
Under 'My Psion Properties | Print options' you should see something like: 'HP Laserjet 4 MP on \\HP_Network_Printers\169.254.1.4'

Corrupt objects

Q I often 'attach' Word documents to entries in my Series 5 Agenda (using [Ctrl]+[Shift]+[Z]). I especially use them on a few 'to-do' items I have permanently displayed in my 'Day' view. For example, I have a to-do item called 'Web', and whenever I see a web site address I



Graphs inside Word which convert via PsiWin—the hard way!


Sun 16 Jul 2000
9:00 This is in the default 9 point text
Sun 16 Jul 2000
9:00 This is in the default 9 point text
Sun 16 Jul 2000
9:00 This is in the default 9 point text

What You See Is Not Necessarily What You've Got!

want to look at, I write it in the attached Word document and take a look later on, when convenient.

But every now and then I try to access the Word object and just get a dialog box saying 'Corrupt'. Since getting a CF disk and backing up to it every day, I can usually just copy and paste the text from the previous backup. However, sometimes even the backup is corrupt. What causes the file to become corrupt and how can I stop it?

Andy Cook, Yate, Nr. Bristol

A **Since you're backing up to CF disk, we'll assume that your Agenda file is on the internal 'C' disk, i.e. stored in your palmtop's main memory. There might be a physical fault with the memory chips involved—if you've had corruption in other applications then this is most likely, and you'll have to contact Psion (see page 112) to get it repaired. If you only ever have problems with this particular Agenda file (and its embedded objects) though, it's probably damaged in some way, either through a power glitch, a bug in EPOC or a faulty third party program.**

Try creating a new Agenda document and using 'File | More | Merge in...' to import the content of your damaged one. Failing this, you'll have to start a new Agenda from scratch. As a last resort if this doesn't work, back up your machine and perform a hard reset. If you still have trouble, we'd suggest finding a different way to accomplish this particular task and at the same time writing to Psion Customer Service explaining your problems in as much detail as you can muster.

Agenda text size

Q I have a Series 5 'Classic' and would prefer a font size of 7 in my Agenda entries rather than the default font size of 9. However, I can't find a way to change the default. Have I missed something?

Dave West, Farnborough

A **Yes and no(!) It's true that there isn't a way to alter the default: if you need special font attributes for the text of an individual entry, you'll have to use the 'More...' button ('Alarm/More...' on the 5mx, etc.) and set them up in the 'Text' tab. But the way many EPOC applications are designed means that the designated font being used is usually irrelevant, as you can use the zoom command icons to enlarge or reduce all the displayed text as needed. Special emphasis will then only be necessary to achieve particular effects.**

Musings...

Single Wired Female Seeks Similar... Debbie Barham looks at that indispensable aid for the single person, a palmtop computer...

Taken from '101 Chat Up Lines for Palmtop Computer Enthusiasts' (2000 Edition). Number 47. "Say babe, what Psion are you? Virgo? Scorpio? Actually I'm a... Revo." What right-minded female could resist the chance to rush pack to his pad and see his PDA? Modern girls aren't afraid to admit that they need their handheld: be it a Palm, a Cassiopeia, a Series 5 or even, for the *really* well-connected woman, a mighty netBook? Forget the F factor and the X factor—what really matters nowadays is the PDA factor.

Psions with sex appeal

There's no denying it—personal organisers are now officially sexy. Combining the easy-on-the-eye metal elegance of a Dualit toaster, the portability of a Baguette handbag and the power of a computer 50 times their size, they've ceased to be the preserve of geeks in malodorous tee shirts who hanker after the heady days of the ZX Spectrum. The Psion has featured in all the influential, trend-setting glossies: Vogue, Cosmo, Palmtop magazine—no longer a dull, gunmetal-grey slab resembling what might be spawned if your spectacles-case copulated with a housebrick, but a slinky, ergonomic piece of kit, whose keyboard slides out with smug, precision-engineered reassurance. So much more satisfying than that plasticky "thwack" that still sends a chill down the spine of any former Siena owner.

But forget the fancy features. The reason the palmtop, Psion or otherwise, beats the pants off its opposition is this: it helps you to *pull*. The case for owning a personal organiser is no longer one of technical necessity. No, there's only one genuine reason to own a palmtop computer. It's a sex symbol. Pure and simple.

Making a date

If you want to get a date, get a Data application. There is, it seems, nothing more alluring in this technical era than to spot the object of your desire seductively fingering his or her handheld across a crowded room. Witness the sophisticated young woman in the wine-bar, waiting for her intended. Does she sit filing her nails and fiddling with her hair? Nah! She's too busy filing her data and reconfiguring her Agenda View.

Just look how the average modern relationship can benefit from the intervention of a handheld device. Forgot to get her number? No problem—if she's keen, chances are she will have zapped it into your Contacts file via the IR link while you weren't looking. Men have always had a biological incapability of pressing the buttons on a telephone keypad during any period less than two months after a date ("I don't want to look *too* keen..."), but with the Psion's automatic DTMF generator, heck, they don't need to! Synchronizing Agendas ensures that neither party ends up standing outside the cinema for three hours. Spreadsheet action is vital in any relationship, and the Revo can easily resolve any acrimonious disputes over joint accounts or who had the Tarte au Chocolat. Hourly exchange of salacious emails will keep the passion alive. And when it all goes horribly wrong? Simply log on to the 'net and hunt out www.dateline.com.

Historical evidence

Not convinced? Imagine how many of history's famously failed romances could have been saved by a PDA. Romeo could have dispensed with all that 'clambering around on balconies' business and simply aimed his infrared in Juliet's general direction. Any disputes would subsequently have been resolved not with swords but with a decisive Tetris tournament. Adam and Eve would still be frolicking round the Garden of Eden, Eve having passed up the chance to eat from the Tree of Knowledge: "nah! I've got all the knowledge I need on my Pocket Encarta!", and gone back to playing Snake on her mobile phone. King Henry VIII could have kept all six wives on the go simultaneously, thanks to the Psion's superlative scheduling capabilities. Jackie 'O' would have had a far happier marriage, had that fatal bullet been deflected by a palmtop in the Presidential pocket, and even Bill Clinton could have used his built-in thesaurus to ascertain the exact meaning of the word "sex".

The wave of the future

Frankly, I fail to see how human beings ever managed to replicate themselves before the advent of palmtop computers. Darwin's theory being correct, the world will soon be populated solely by Psion users, all computer-illiterate life forms having died out due to their inability to multiply (easy on a Psion, just tap the Calc button). The geek, as they say, shall inherit the Earth. We may, indeed, re-evolve our prehensile toes as a typing aid, along with a marsupial-like 'pouch' or fold of loose skin at waist level: Mother Nature's own Mulberry leather slipcase.

And dammit, if it works... well, why not? This is the magic ingredient that could put the electricity back into relationships right across the globe. The makers of dubious pheromone sprays could do a lot worse than go into partnership with the palmtop industry. Come to think of it, we never *did* have a Series 4—how about the Psion Series PHWOOOOARH! instead?

Debbie Barham is a TV scriptwriter, columnist and writer for magazines ranging from Computeractive to Cosmopolitan. She owns more handheld PCs than she has hands and is currently working on a major piece of humorous fiction: her 1999/2000 Tax Return.

Glossary

Application bar - The touch-sensitive strip along the edge of most EPOC screens, from which selected built-in applications can be launched.

Browser - Application for navigating the World Wide Web, running on any computer platform.

C++ - An efficient high level programming language now used for the majority of commercial EPOC applications. Much harder to learn than OPL, but more powerful and usually gives more compact, faster code.

CF - See **CompactFlash**.

Commercial software - Software produced by full-time programming companies, most often supplied in pre-packaged form.

CompactFlash - Small solid-state memory expansion modules, as used in all current EPOC devices except the Revo. See the 'Inside CompactFlash' feature in issue 17 of *Palmtop*.

Control panel - Invoked by pressing [Crtl]+[K] from the System screen on EPOC devices, showing a list of system control functions such as screen and keyboard settings, printer and dialling preferences, etc.

Crystal - A new category of EPOC communicators featuring half-VGA landscape format screen and full keyboard, due for release sometime in 2001.

Download - To transfer a file from an Internet web site or FTP site onto your palmtop or desktop computer.

EIKON - The 'front end' interface used on all current EPOC devices, that governs the position and appearance of menus, icons, dialog boxes, etc.

Embedding - The act of placing a Spreadsheet, Sketch, Sound object, etc. *within* another EPOC document.

Emulator - A program that mimics the operation of one computer operating system on another. PC-based emulators are available for both SIBO and EPOC devices.

EPOC - Term used to describe the operating system used on the Series 5 range of palmtops and all other current models. Not actually an acronym, EPOC was coined from 'Epoch', being touted as a new 'era' in handheld operating systems.

EPOC Connect - The name given to PsiWin when bundled with non-Psion devices such as those made by Ericsson and Oregon Scientific. Functionally almost identical to equivalent PsiWin versions.

ER1/ER2/ER3 - EPOC Release 1/2/3. The first major versions of the EPOC operating system, as employed on the original Series 5 'Classic' and Geofox One.

ER4 - EPOC Release 4. An update of the EPOC operating system employed only (to date) on the Oregon Scientific Osaris.

ER5 - EPOC Release 5. Currently the latest version of EPOC, as used on the Series 5mx, Series 7, netBook, Revo and Ericsson MC218.

Flash - Another term for 'flash memory' devices, such as **CompactFlash** and flash **SSD**.

Freeware - Software that is supplied or made downloadable free of charge. The author/programmer makes no charge for its use, but usually offers no warranties on its stability or performance.

FTP - File Transfer Protocol. FTP sites are sometimes used instead of World Wide Web

(WWW) sites as a repository for files and data and web content. Special 'FTP client' software is required to upload files to FTP sites.

Geofox One - The first non-Psion EPOC device, introduced in late 1997. Geofox ceased trading one year later after selling only around 1000 units. See issue 15 of *Palmtop* for a full review.

GPS - Global Positioning System. A GPS receiver is a small handheld device that can pinpoint your physical location anywhere in the world with an accuracy of a few metres, by triangulating its position from military satellites in orbit. Some GPS receivers can be connected to EPOC devices with suitable software and cables. See issue 19 for most recent coverage in *Palmtop*.

GSM - Global System for Mobile telecommunications. A widely adopted worldwide communications standard for mobile telephones. Most notably absent within the USA.

GUI - Graphical User Interface, such as the EIKON system used on EPOC devices, utilising windows, icons, menus, etc. Was preceded by the Command Line Interface (CLI), as used on DOS-based PCs of the 1970-80s.

Honda connector - The small flat connector used to plug an RS232 (Serial) cable into current EPOC devices.

HTML - HyperText Markup Language. The simple scripting system used to create World Wide Web (WWW) pages.

Icon bar - See **application bar**.

Infrared - Wireless communication technique used to transfer data between suitably equipped palmtops and printers/modems, etc. All EPOC devices are equipped with infrared capability.

IrDA - Infrared Data Association. A group set up to form standards for infrared data exchange, and the term used to describe the resulting standard currently employed. All EPOC devices conform to the IrDA standard, but earlier infrared-equipped Psion Series 3 devices do not, and are thus normally unable to communicate with other IrDA devices.

ISP - Internet Service Provider. Companies set up to provide Internet access via a dial-up system.

Java - A high level programming language designed to create programs that will run, without modification, on several computing platforms, such as PC, Macintosh, Unix and EPOC. See *Palmtop* issues 25-27 for a detailed feature on Java.

MacConnect - Psion's nearest EPOC equivalent to PsiWin for the Apple Macintosh, but offering only backup, restore and software installation, with no file conversions or synchronization.

Macro - A series of keystrokes, 'recorded' and 'played back' by a suitable utility program to automate commonly-performed tasks.

MBM - Multi BitMap. EPOC's standard picture format.

MC218 - Ericsson's 'clone' of the Series 5mx. Fully compatible with the Series 5mx and capable of running all software designed for the Series 5 range. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 24 and 26.

Message Suite - Psion's combined Email and Web applications for the Series 5 'Classic'.

Modem - Modulator/demodulator. Device used to convert computer data to/from

audible pulses that can be transmitted down a conventional telephone line. Required for Internet access from a palmtop.

netBook - Psion's 'vertical market' variant of the Series 7, with more memory and a faster processor. Featured in *Palmtop* issue 27.

Null modem adaptor - small box/connector used to connect two computers or devices such as a modem via an RS232 (Serial) cable by transposing the send/receive wires.

Object - Spreadsheets, Sketches, Sound files, etc. that are *embedded* within another EPOC document. See **embedding**.

OPL - Organiser Programming Language. The BASIC-like high level programming language built into most Psion devices, which can be programmed directly from all Psion devices except for the Revo.

OPX - An extension to OPL, providing extra functionality under EPOC.

Osaris - EPOC device produced by Oregon Scientific in 1999. The Osaris will not run many EPOC programs due to its small (320x200 pixel) screen. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 24 and 26.

Palmtop CD - PC and Macintosh compatible CD-ROM supplied free with *Palmtop* magazine subscriptions and containing virtually all non-commercial Psion-related software ever produced.

Parallel link - Cable for connecting EPOC computers to standard Parallel (Centronics) sockets as found on most PC-compatible printers.

PC-Card adaptor - Psion adaptor to allow connection to PC-Card modems, etc. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 11.

PCMCIA Card - Now known simply as 'PC-Card'.

Pearl - New category of EPOC smartphones, due for release in 2001.

Pixel - Term derived from 'picture element'. Refers to a single 'dot' on a computer screen.

POP3 - A common Internet mail protocol for downloading messages.

PsiMac - Psion's nearest Series 3 (SIBO) equivalent to PsiWin for the Apple Macintosh, but offering only backup, restore and software installation, plus Word and Sheet conversion.

Psion Organiser - Term coined with the appearance of Psion's first handheld 'organiser' device in 1984.

PsiWin - PC-based software that allows backup/restore, software installation, conversion of files and synchronization of certain data between Psion/EPOC devices and PCs.

Quartz - New category of EPOC devices featuring keyboardless operation, due for release later this year.

RAM - Random Access Memory.

Revo - The Revo was introduced in late 1999 as a cut-down and compact Series 5-like machine, with a non-backlit screen and no memory expansion capability.

ROM - Read Only Memory.

RS232 - Long-standing serial communications standard used for cable connections between all Psion/EPOC devices and desktop computers.

RTF - Rich Text Format. A common word processor file format supported by many word processing programs, and built into Psion Series 3 devices as a standard saveable/readable format.

SDK - Software Development Kit. A set of tools used for programming.

Serial cable - See **RS232**.

Series 3 - The first range of Psion palmtops to feature a QWERTY keyboard. First introduced in 1991, later models were the 3a, 3c

and 3mx, with the 3mx finally discontinued in late 1999.

Series 5 - The first Psion palmtops to feature the EPOC operating system, introduced in mid-1997.

Series 7 - Introduced in late 1999 as a handheld/laptop hybrid, featuring colour screen and both CF and PC-Card expansion slots. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 25 and 27.

Shareware - Software that can be freely copied or downloaded for a fixed evaluation period, after which the software should be paid for. Shareware 'registration' fees generally range from £5-£25.

SIBO - Now refers to the operating system used by the Series 3 range of Psion palmtops. An acronym of 'SIngle Board Organiser'.

Siena - Introduced in 1996 as a cut down Series 3 device with a half-width screen and no memory expansion capabilities.

Silk-screen - The touch-sensitive area around the screen edge of EPOC devices, includes the menu, infrared, clipboard and zoom command icons.

SIS - Software Installation System. A means of installing software to an EPOC device via a single, self-extracting file.

SMS - Short Messaging Service. Used to send text messages up to 160 characters in length via the GSM telephone network.

SMTP - Simple Mail Transfer Protocol. A common Internet mail protocol for sending messages.

SSD - Solid State Disk. Proprietary storage 'card' devices used to expand the capacity of the Series 3 range of palmtops.

Symbian - A joint venture between Psion, Nokia, Ericsson, Motorola and other major telecommunications/computing companies to develop the EPOC standard and its derivatives.

System folder - A hidden folder present on all EPOC devices and containing numerous system settings/configuration files and all installed add-on software. See 'Inside the System folder' in *Palmtop* issue 28 for more details

System screen - The equivalent of a PC 'desktop' on Psion/EPOC devices. Accessed from EPOC by pressing the 'System' silk-screen button.

Toolbar - The strip of software buttons present down one side of the screen within most EPOC applications.

Upload - To transfer a file to an Internet web site or FTP site from your palmtop or desktop computer.

URL - Uniform Resource Locator. Essentially the unique address of an Internet web or FTP site.

WAP - Wireless Application Protocol. A system for delivery of Internet content to handheld devices.

Web - Abbreviated form of 'World Wide Web', the graphical system of hypertext pages published on the Internet.

Zip - A compressed file format used widely on PCs and commonly adopted on Psion/EPOC devices.

For a more comprehensive list of article cross-references, see the Palmtop index, supplied on all Palmtop CDs, or freely downloadable from www.palmtop.co.uk .

Usenet Groups, etc.

comp.sys.psion.announce
comp.sys.psion.misc
comp.sys.psion.comm
comp.sys.psion.apps
comp.sys.psion.programmer
comp.sys.psion.marketplace
comp.sys.psion.reviews

These newsgroups are the unmoderated discussion groups on the Internet. It's easiest to access them via a desktop machine using Microsoft or Netscape web browsers (choose 'Read newsgroups' or similar on their menu), but there's now also a dedicated EPOC newsreader, RMRNews, which you can download from *www.rmrsoft.com* .

There are also digests, with daily messages sent by email. Subscribe at *www.pinkworks.com/pda/s5list.html* .

Linux users can find a Linux Psion mailing list at *linux-psion@geekstuff.co.uk* and more Psion-related information at *ftp://ftp.to.com/pub/psion* .

Proprietary discussion forums

AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion
CiX Psion conference	join psion join cixed

Psion-related software

3-Lib	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*
CiX	'join psion', then look in '/files' and '/s5_files' file lists
EPOC Software	*www.epocsoftware.com*
Plus, of course, the Palmtop CD	See page 141.

Psion FAQ

The Series 3 and Series 5 Frequently Asked Questions documents contain useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm

Information

3 For All	*freespace.virgin.net/ro.cutler*
3-Lib	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*
Armlink	*www.armlink.ndirect.co.uk*
Palmtop magazine	*www.palmtop.co.uk*
PocketInfo	*www.pocketinfo.org*
Psion	*www.psion.com*
Symbian	*www.symbian.com*

News

PDA News	*news.tucows.com/pdanews*
EPOC News	*www.epocnews.com*
EPOC Zone	*www.epoczone.com*
Widget News	*www.widget.com*

Software houses

Atelier	*www.atelier.tm*
Beelogic	*www.beelogic.com*
Ben Vaughan Software	*www.bjv.btinternet.co.uk*
FreEPOC	*www.freepoc.de*
Neuon	*www.neuon.com*
Palmtime	*www.shoresystems.net/palmtime*
Palmtop Software (formerly BV)	*www.palmtopsoftware.com*
PocketIQ	*www.pocketiq.com*
Purple Software	*www.purplesoft.com*
RMR Software	*www.rmrsoft.com*
Widget Software	*www.widget.co.uk*

Miscellaneous

Directory of software authors	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk/authors.htm*
FoxPop	*www.foxpop.ndirect.co.uk*
Go32	*www.go32.com*
Online with your Psion	*homepages.ihug.co.nz/~jochens*
Revoworld	*www.revoworld.com*

Search engines

Googol	*www.googol.net*
Psion Websearches	*psion.websearches.net*

Problems with your Psion?

Here are some useful guidelines if you think you may have a problem with your Psion palmtop:

Things to check

Before even thinking of picking up the phone, make sure you've checked the following, if only to save your own embarrassment if it turns out to be something easy to solve:

- Are the batteries OK? The Psion's own battery information option (from the System screen menu) will give you an indication of their health, otherwise you might want to invest in a cheap battery tester. If in doubt, replace them with brand new alkaline batteries. Note that rechargeable batteries have a much shorter life and do not always give accurate readings with the Psion's built-in battery checker.
- If the screen appears to be faulty, it could be that the contrast just needs adjusting. If set to minimum you will have a blank screen, whereas a maximum setting will give you an all-black screen. To adjust the contrast on a Series 3, hold down [Psion]+[.], on EPOC machines, it's [Fn]+[.]. If the touch screen is misbehaving, go into System's 'Control panel | Screen' and recalibrate.
- A common problem with the Series 5/5mx is a stuck stylus. To reset the mechanism, gently pull on the lip on the underside of the case, just below the RS-232 connector (or see *Palmtop* issue 15, page 86).
- Have you tried resetting the Psion? If it's still possible to back up the unit, do so again unless you already have a very recent backup. Then try a 'soft' reset. If that doesn't sort things out, try a 'hard' reset (see the manual for details on how to do this). If neither of these work, it's worth unhooking all cables, removing all the batteries (AAs *and* the backup cell) plus any SSD or CompactFlash, and leaving the unit for 30 minutes. Put the batteries back in and try again, restoring your data if the Psion comes back to life.

Checks complete, but the fault is still there?

If all the above advice fails to help, it's best to contact the experts. If outside the UK, you'll have to contact your local distributors for support options. You can find a list of worldwide service agents at *www.psion.com/international*. If within the UK, read on...

Machine repairs

If your machine has developed a hardware fault, you may find that your supplier (particularly if a High Street store) has an arrangement for replacing your faulty machine. However, most people get their units repaired either by Psion themselves or by POS Ltd. If your Psion is still covered by the 12-month warranty, you should definitely contact Psion. If it is older than a year then you have a choice, although prices are generally similar between the two.

Repairs by Psion

The Psion Repair Centre can be contacted by telephone on 0208 575 9919, or by email at *uk-repair@psion.com* .

If in the UK, send the broken palmtop by Registered post or by courier, to:

Psion UK Repair Centre
Unit 6 Derby Road
Metropolitan Centre
Greenford
Middlesex UB6 8U

If using a Psion Enterprise product, such as a netBook, see *www.enterprise.psion.com/public/instruct.htm* for their current return procedure.

Psion *do not* guarantee to save data that may already be on your machine, so it is important to back up your data first if at all possible. You should remove the batteries (if your data is safe), stylus and SSDs/CFs. Package the machine securely, and enclose a covering letter describing the fault, remembering to supply a daytime phone number and return address.

Remember to keep a note of your machine's serial number, most commonly found beneath the SSD/CF disk door, as you may need to quote this if contacting Psion.

Attach some proof of purchase if you expect the repair to be under warranty. Psion will acknowledge receipt of the palmtop into their system, billing you if the repair is chargeable, and will usually return the fixed unit within about a week, by courier.

Repairs by POS Ltd

POS Ltd. offer a similar postal service, plus 'while you wait' repairs at their high street shop at 143 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EG. Providing you've booked an appointment, repairs can generally be done on the spot in 1-2 hours.

Telephone POS Ltd. on 0208 677 9246 or see *www.posltd.com* for further details.

Technical support

If you have a software or operational problem, you may wish to contact Psion's Technical Support department. You can do this by email via their web site or, in the UK, call the premium rate support service on 0906 554 0000. See *www.psion.com/support/support_info.asp* for prices and other support options. Before calling, consult your manual, or the Support Knowledgebase at *www.psion.com/support* for answers to common questions.

Alternative support

As an alternative to Psion's own support, you may like to try either POS Ltd (details given above) or pSIONMAN, as advertised on page 136 of this issue.

Psion/EPOC models at a glance

Maker	Model	Year launched	Original price (inc VAT)	Memory	Operating system
Psion	Organiser I	1984	£99	2K	Psion
Psion	Organiser II CM	1986	£99	8K	Psion
Psion	Organiser II XP	1986	£139	16K/32K	Psion
Psion	Organiser II LZ	1988	£149/189	32K/64K	Psion
Psion	MC200	1989	£495	128K	SIBO
Psion	MC400/Word	1989	£695	256K	SIBO
Psion	MC600	1989	£1295	768K	DOS 3.2
Psion	Series 3	1991	£199/£249	128K/256K	SIBO
Psion	Series 3a	1993	£279/£329	256K/512K	SIBO
Psion	Series 3a	1995	£339/£399	1MB/2MB	SIBO
Psion	Workabout	1995	Various	Various	SIBO and custom
Psion	Series 3c	1996	£339/£399	1MB/2MB	SIBO
Psion	Siena	1996	£169/£229	512K/1MB	SIBO
Psion	Series 5	1997	£439/£499	4MB/8MB	EPOC
Geofox	Geofox One	1997	£385/£599	4MB/16MB	EPOC
Psion	Series 3mx	1998	£269	2MB	SIBO
Psion	Workabout mx	1998	Various	Various	SIBO and custom
Psion	Series 5mx	1999	£429	16MB	EPOC
Ericsson	MC218	1999	£479	16MB	EPOC
Oregon Scientific	Osaris	1999	£219/£279	4MB/8MB	EPOC
Psion	Series 7	1999	£699	16MB	EPOC
Psion Enterprise	netBook	1999	£995	32MB	EPOC
Psion	Revo	1999	£299	8MB	EPOC

Processor type/speed	Screen	Expansion options	Infra-red
	16-character single line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	16-character, 2 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	16-character, 2 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	20-character, 4 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 200	4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 400	4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 200	1MB 'internal' disk, OS in flash RAM	No
NEC V30/3.84Mhz	240 x 80	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	240 x 100 backlit	2 internal SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160 (later backlit)	2 SSD slots	Yes
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	240 x 160	External (optional) SSD drive	Yes
ARM 710/18.43Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
ARM 710/18.43Mhz	640 x 320, backlit	PC-Card slot	Yes
NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz	480 x 160, backlit	2 SSD slots	Yes
NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz	240 x 100 backlit	2 internal SSD slots	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
CL-PS7111/18.43Mhz	320 x 200, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
StrongArm SA-1100 /130Mhz	640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash and PC-Card slots	Yes
StrongArm SA-1100 /190Mhz	640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash and PC-Card slots	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	480 x 160, touch sensitive	None	Yes

Using the Palmtop CD-ROM

- **Windows** users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install a 'web browser' application such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape (these can be found on almost all PC magazine cover CDs). After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

  Please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (e.g. use [Control]+[P] on the EPOC machine) if you have problems with running or removing software.

  Those who install a new web browser should note that it often comes with its default start page set to the maker's web site, meaning that it tries to go online. Just go into its 'View|Options' dialog (or similar) and set the start page to a file local to your computer (e.g. the *Palmtop* CD Start.htm file).

- **Macintosh** users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Please note that the Psion screen saver, demos and Emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly on your Mac. The latest CDs also come with a Mac-specific start page.

- **DOS** and **Amiga** owners may be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the library section and copy off the software as needed.

- Users of **RISC OS** machines have had a few problems with the 'Joliet' format used on the Palmtop CD-ROM. Fortunately that has now been resolved, and users of those machines can now access all of the web sites on the CD without getting error messages (although they obviously won't be able to run any of the applications). All that's needed is a copy of Warm Silence Software's CDROMFS. For more details, contact Warm Silence Software Ltd, PO Box 28, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1XX. tel: 0585 487642, fax: 01608 737172 or see their web site at *www.wss.co.uk*.

  RISC OS users will also find that the copy of the ArmLink web site on the CD contains PsiFS, a free application they can use to transfer files between their palmtop and desktop machines.

- **Linux** users should mount the CD on their computer and open their web browser on the 'Start.htm' file. The Psion screen saver, demos and emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly under Linux.

FOR SALE, WANTED, ETC...

Subject to available space this personal classified advertisement page is available free of charge as a courtesy to subscribers. It can only be used for Psion-related items. Please contact the Editor (see page 1 for address details) directly to submit your ads.

This service is not available to non-subscribers, nor to Psion dealers. We bear no liability for items bought or sold from this page.

NEW Australian User Group

Anyone interested in joining a new EPOC User GRoup in Sydney, Australia with a view to having regular meetings to discuss applications/uses and further the growth of Psion in Australia, please contact Andre Vlcek by email with their details: avlcek@orange.net.au

For Sale

Psion Siena (1MB) - £90 ono.
Contact: Tom Menzies on 0131 445 3928

Travel modem for Psion 3c/5/5mx, includes mains adaptor - £70.
Contact: Roger Ninnim on 0831 345490
Email: mister.tuft@psion.net

Psion Series 3mx with English/French Phrase Book, Purple Chess, Scrabble, Autoroute Express (all on SSD), 1MB flash SSD and PsiWin 2.2 CD with cable - £200.
Contact: Peter Ruddle on 01707 657333

Series 3a (512K), 3Fax pocket modem, leather case, zip case, power supply, serial Link (two for sale), parallel link, Telenote (SMS) Link, PsiMail Internet, PsiWin 1.0, Notepad Deluxe, Money, Widget Tools, Wine Guide '94, Berlitz Phrase Book, DataDeluxe, Dataview Pro, 3 Base, Expense Tracker, Autoroute Express UK, Monopoly, Timebase 6, Paint & Compose, Time Manager, 512K RAM SSD, 1MB RAM SSD, 128K Flash SSD (2), 2MB Flash SSD, 4M Flash SSD, 8M Flash SSD, '100 Most F.A.Qs' book, Copernicus Quick Reference Guide. Will sell complete or split—all reasonable offers considered!
Contact: Robert Owen on 01992 584739
e-mail: rcwo@compuserve.com

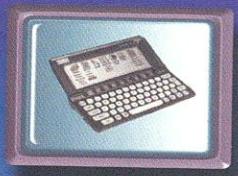
Psion Series 5 'Classic' (8MB) with leather case - £225.00, Psion Travel Modem - £ 50.
Email: cdford@compuserve.com

Series 5 (8MB) with additional 8MB CF - £200 ono, leather case - £10. Hard case £15.
Email: markjlester@hotmail.com

Psion Series 5 (8MB) and leather case plus mains adaptor, printer cable, chess game, all relevant issues of Palmtop magazine and warranty and accidental damage cover until Aug. 2001 - £180.
Contact: Julia Broadhead on 0374 965934

The complete solution for Psion users...

local service...worldwide *local service...worldwide* *local service...worldwide*



Specialist advice, sales and support for full range of Psion machines, for both the individual and corporate user

Full range of accessories, from the largest capacity memory cards to the latest Dacom PCMCIA cards

Full range of adaptors, cables and software

Mobile communications solutions for most phones, via cable or infrared dataphone

Extensive range of upgrades for most TDK / Nokia / Psion Dacom cards

GPS units, software and connectivity to 5 and 3 series machines always available

Official distributor for all Covertec products, from the proven range of rugged belt cases to the stylish and exclusive Covertec Deluxe wallets - the ultimate case for every occasion

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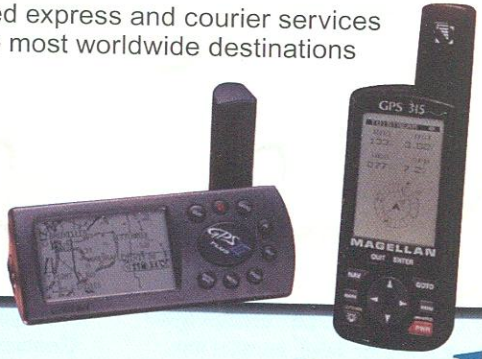

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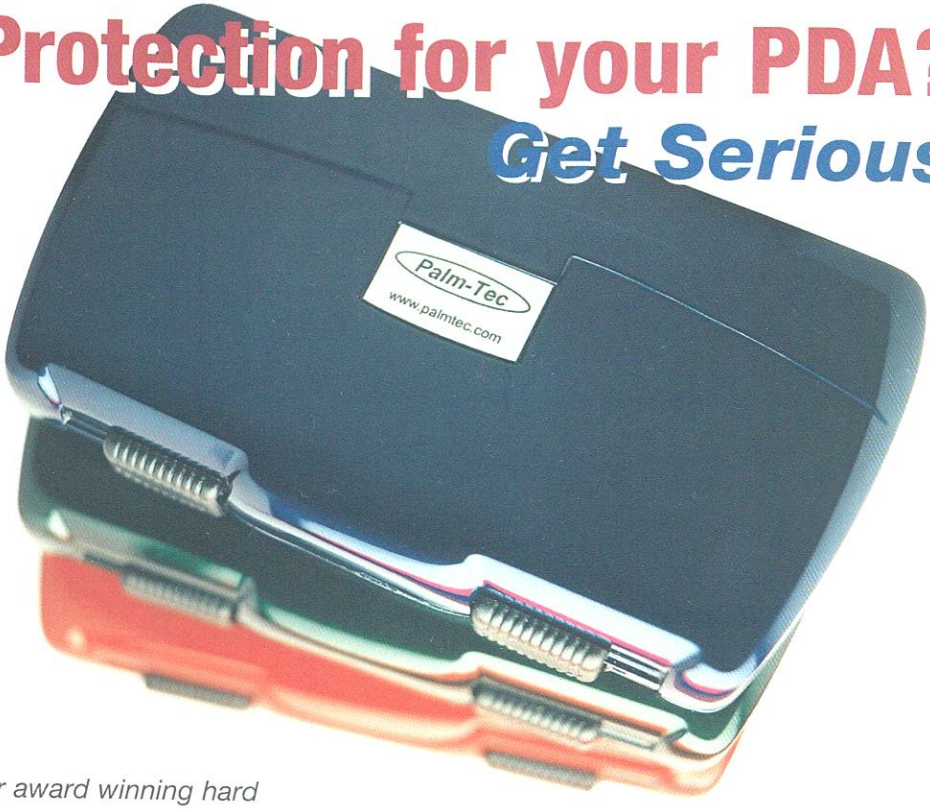

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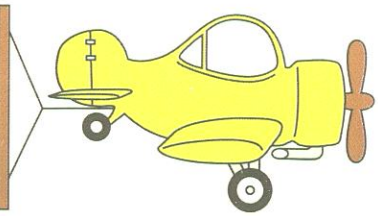

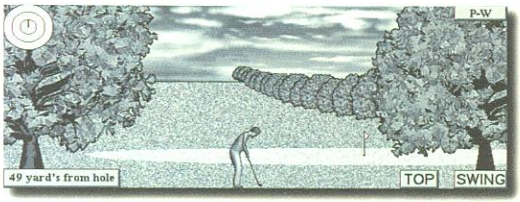

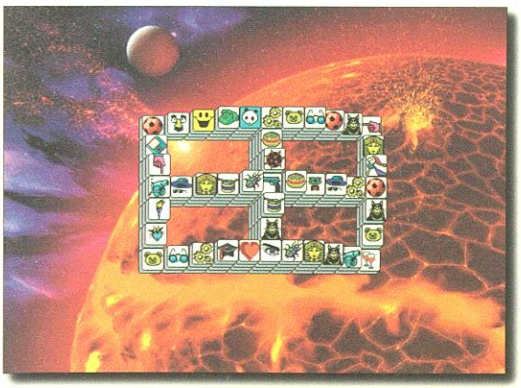

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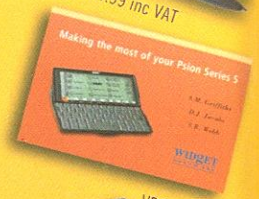

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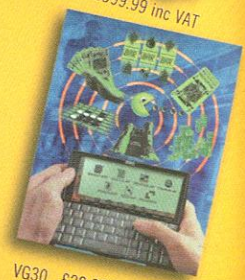
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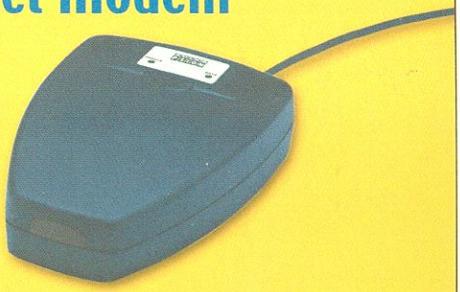

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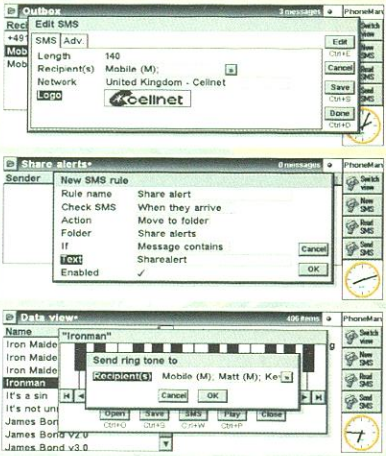

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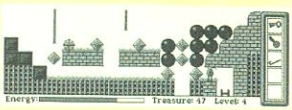

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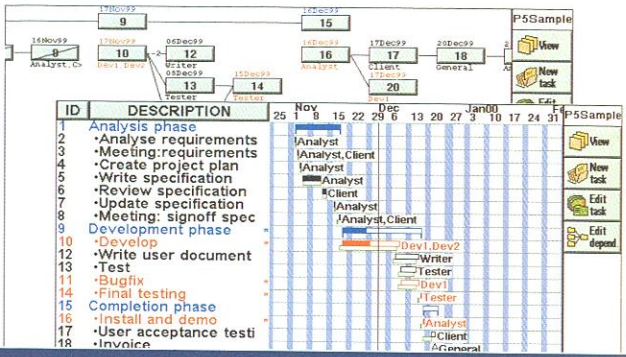

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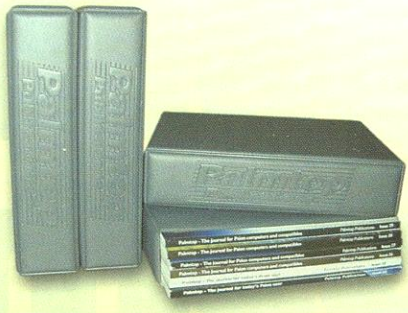

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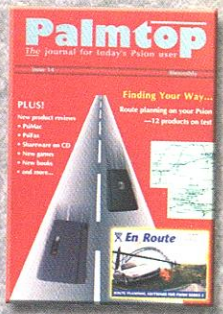

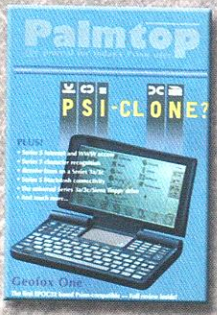

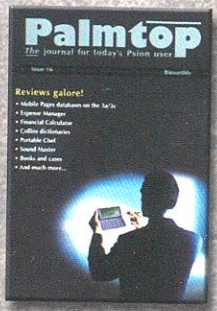

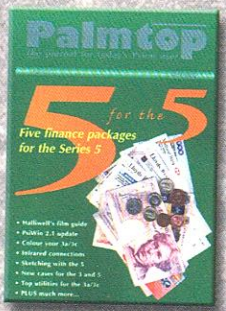

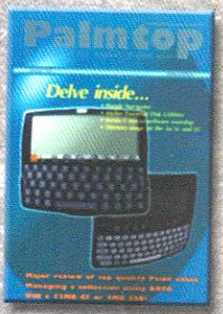

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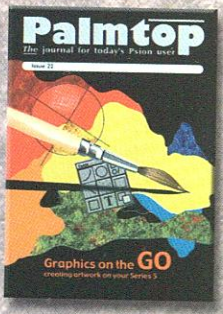

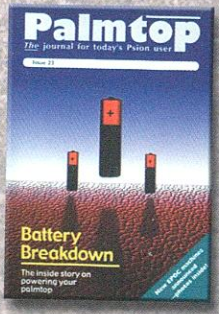

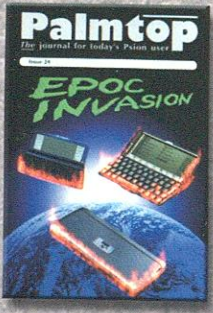

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Planned for issue 31:

- Some new Psion hardware under scrutiny...
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- Choosing your Psion. The pros and cons of the Revo, Series 5mx, Series 7/netBook and others...
- Connecting your Psion to desktop and office printers
- Large capacity storage solutions for your EPOC computer, from giant CF disks to miniature hard disks
- Getting along with EPOCSync—a new way to keep EPOC devices in step with each other, PCs and remote storage sites
- Working with Word—part 3 of our tutorial series
- A roundup of essential add-on software for the Revo
- Genealogy on your Psion—track your family tree with your palmtop
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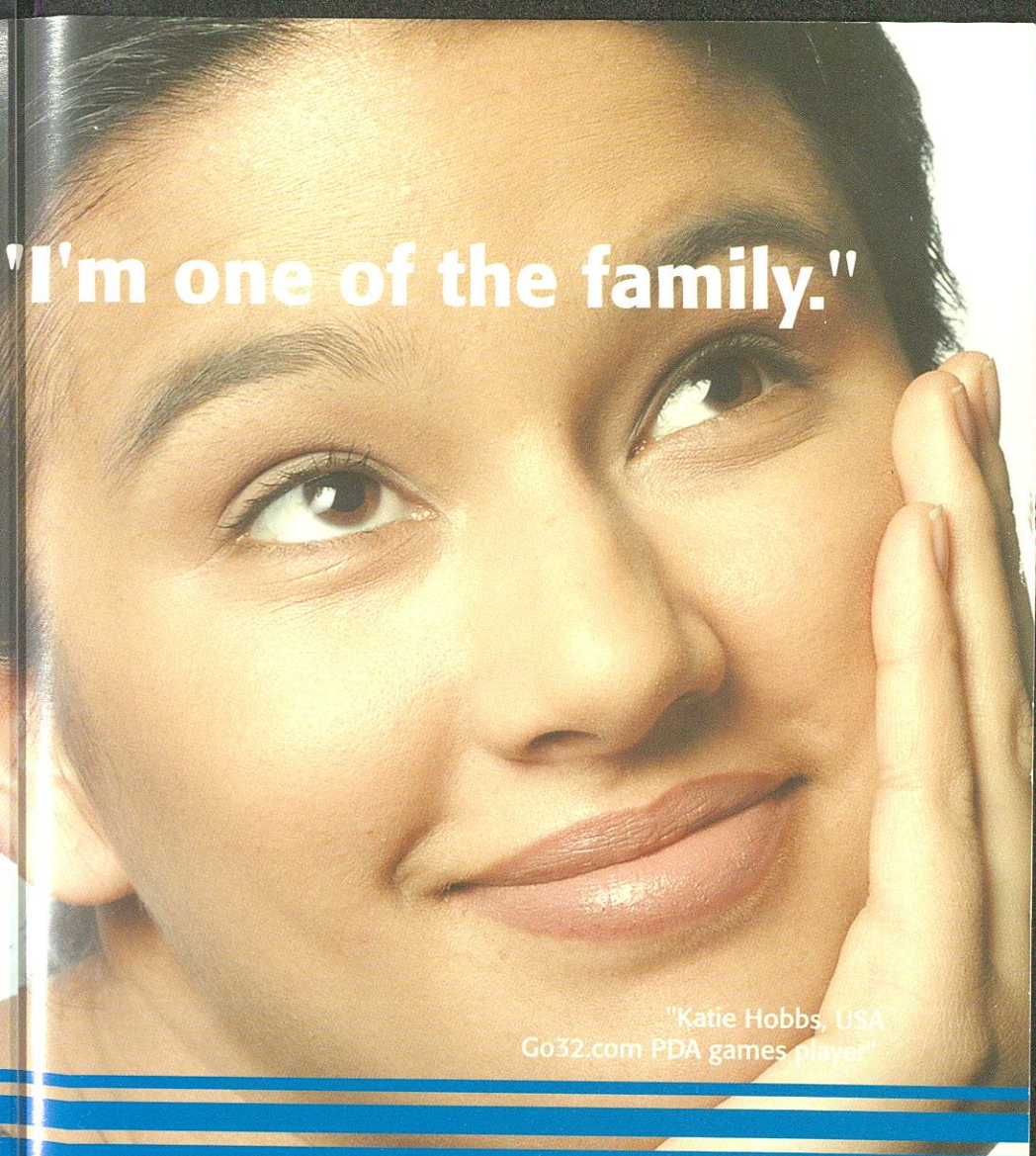

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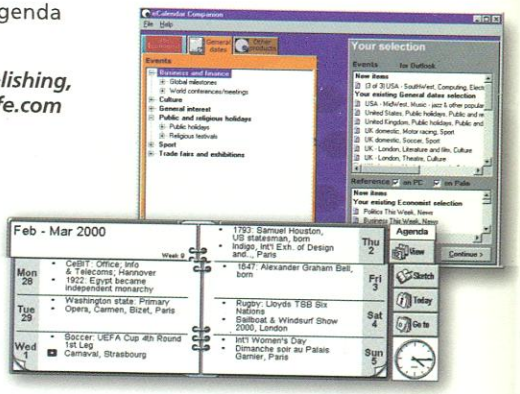

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